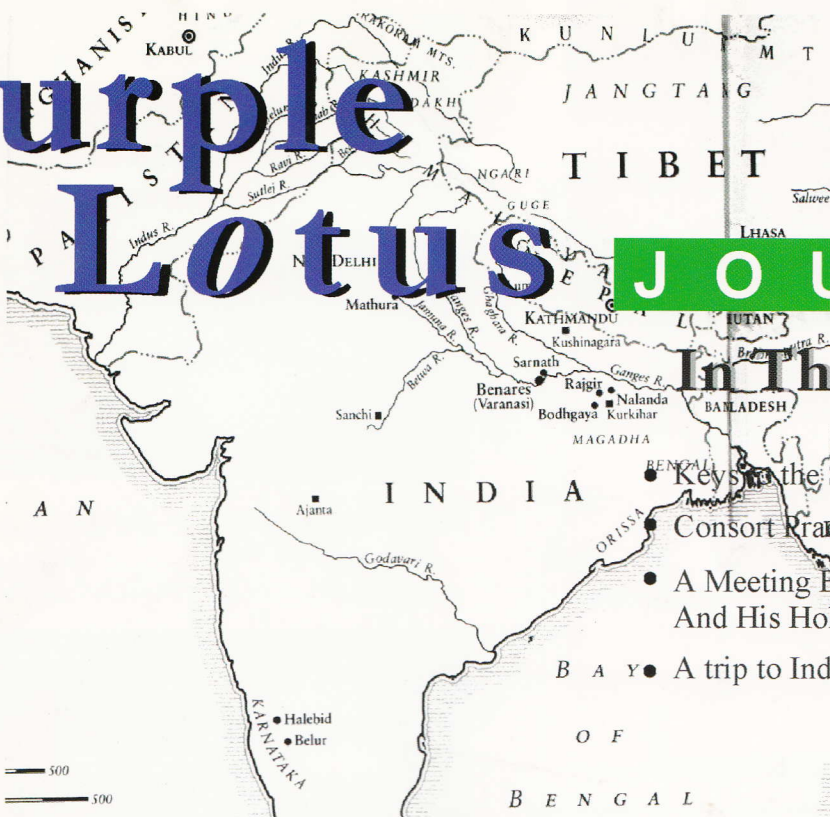


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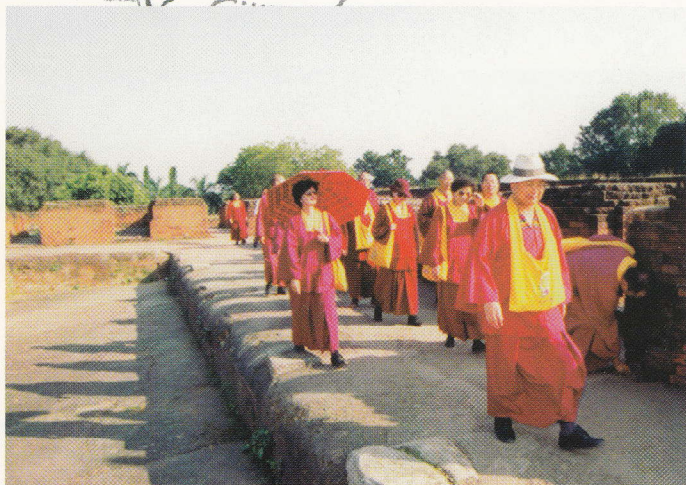
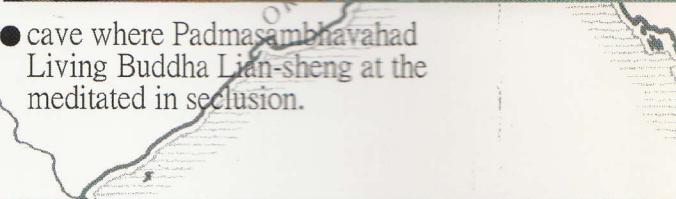
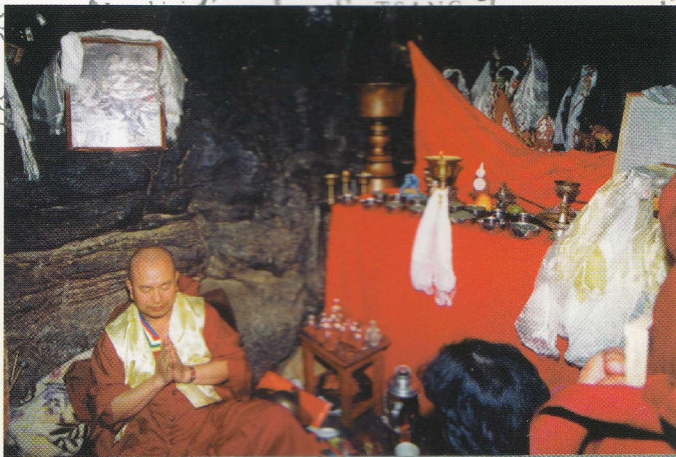
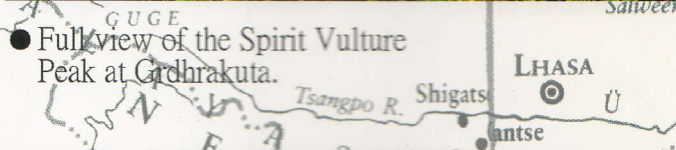
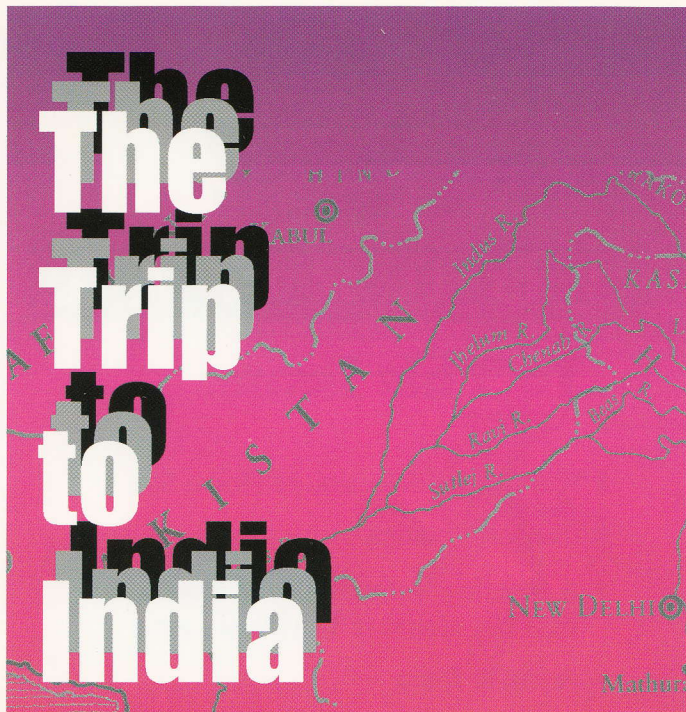
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- Consort Practice
- A Meeting Between Grand Master Lu And His Holiness The Dalai Lama
- A trip to India

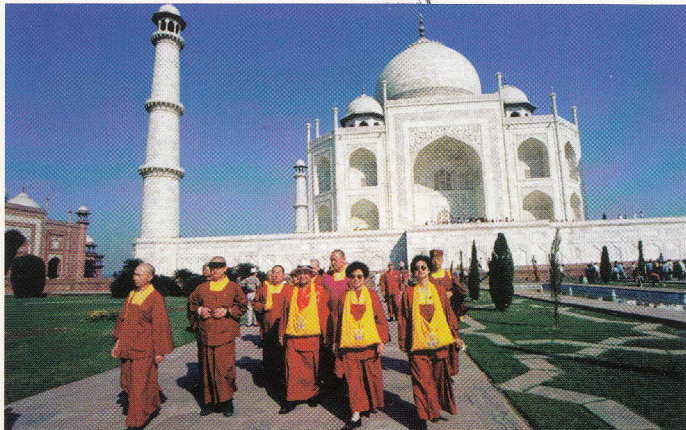


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● Visiting the Indian National monument of Taj Mahal.



● Together with the abbot of Drepung Loselling Monastery in front of the Cultural Museum.

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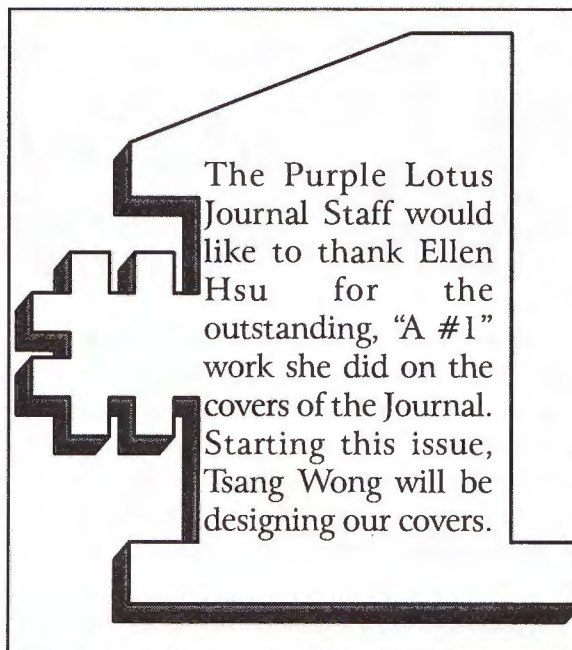
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The Purple Lotus Journal Staff would like to thank Ellen Hsu for the outstanding, "A #1" work she did on the covers of the Journal. Starting this issue, Tsang Wong will be designing our covers.

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Keys to the Selection of Home Sites

by Grand Master Lu
Translated¹ by Janny Chow



Apart from the "high peaked," "low and over-shadowed," "haunted by noxious spirits," and "odd shaped" sites mentioned in the previous chapters, there are many other places that are inauspicious and thus unsuitable for building homes. In selecting a site, it is essential that one consults with an expert feng shui master and invites him or her to give the place a thorough reading.

In places where the soil is predominantly sandy, the building of homes is not advised. Earth chi dissipates quickly in sand, therefore such places lack an abundance of earth chi.

One may also rule out rocky ground because earth chi also dissipates quickly there. Without a nurturing chi, such sites can cause more harm than good.

A soil with good earth chi is one that is half way between clay and ordinary soil. There should be enough cohesiveness in the soil for it to form a clump when held and clenched in a fist.

It is also best if the rear of the lot is slightly more elevated than the front. Such a geographical feature indicates the presence of a "back support" as well as having a "proper receptacle" for receiving the converging earth chi. Houses on such sites are sitting properly on "chairs" provided by the great earth.

Before constructing the house, one should inspect the right and left sides of the site for any geographical "arm rests." "Arm rests" represent "guards" as well as "benefactors," and they also symbolize the "storing and accumulation of chi," indicating that help would come in many forms.

A desirable front view from the house should consist of a wide vista that is flat or sloping slightly

forward, as long as there are no broken cliffs or deep hollows. It is even better if the vista includes a scenic lake in the distance. Having other houses situated right across from one's house is fine as long as one's front door does not directly face the corner of any house.

Actually, the four major rules for selecting a tomb site may also be applied to the selection of a residence. These are: "having a back support," "having an armrest on the left and right sides," "having a 'reflective' body of water in the front," and "having an island in the water." These four principles for selecting a "yin abode" [for the deceased] are the same as for selecting a "yang abode" [for the living].

Building sites in cities are generally quite flat, but by observing the direction of the flow of rivers or other water courses, one may determine which spot is more elevated and which is lower. Pay attention to the cohesiveness of the soil. Scan buildings on both sides to see if they are neat and pleasing to the eye and whether they would enhance one's house. Take into consideration if there would be any front view obstruction after the house is completed. As one plans to live for a long time in a custom built home on a selected site, a beautiful view day-in, day-out helps to soothe one's mind.

On the other hand, if the front view is a garbage dump, an electrical pole, a corner of somebody's house, or a chicken farm, it may create obstructions and unpleasantness in the atmosphere, and cause roadblocks in the emotional well-being of the whole family. The earth chi also may be destroyed if one grows vegetables or other crops in front of the house, decides to dig a manure pit in front, and uses chicken manure stored in the pit to fertilize the plants. One should be wary of and pay particular attention to these other features,

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

Feng Shui Tip



Although trees can be beneficial to a property, very tall trees that cover the house and whose roots grow under the house can create problems. The excessive yin energy from too many large trees absorbs the yang energy of the occupants, leaving the occupants vulnerable to illnesses.

which also have great bearing on the earth chi: a garbage incinerator in front, an approach road that runs into the front of the house, a chimney in front of the house, and temples in front or behind the house.

Before purchasing a site, one needs to find out about the history of the land. Paddy fields, dry farmlands, woods, farms, factories, pastures, roads, and grasslands are auspicious. Sites after fire disasters, hundred year old houses, execution grounds, cemeteries, temples, hospitals, crematoriums, isolated tomb sites, and historical monuments are inauspicious for building homes.

If one wants to build a home on land where there has been a chicken farm, livestock ranch, or pig farm, one must first dig up fifty centimeters of the top soil and replace it with clean earth. Once this is done, the land will be all right.

If one must build a home on land occupied by noxious spirits, one should avert future obstacles by first making peace with the spirits and having the land cleansed. Buddhist monks or nuns may be invited to chant sutras to help deliver the spirits

and pray for peacefulness.

When I, Living Buddha Lian-sheng, do feng shui readings for residences, I always first inspect the land before the house itself. This is to study the overall earth energy. If the overall energy is vigorous, people living there will definitely prosper. If the overall energy is weak, the luck of the occupants will definitely go downhill. Big houses should be paired with strong earth chi, while small houses must be paired with earth chi that matches the smaller size.

Building a small house on land with great earth energy is a waste. Building a grand home on land with weak earth energy is to invite decline.

Another factor to consider is that, in urban areas, roads radiate in all directions. Cars speeding on the roads also contribute to the overall atmosphere of the environment. Some roads are straight while others are winding and zigzagging.

Straight roads can cause the problem of "an oncoming charge of chi." Winding roads can create "a convex situation" specific to curves.

It is best to avoid building homes on sites that are charged by oncoming roads or on the convex side or outside of a curve. I shall explain these factors in detail in a later chapter. (A site facing an oncoming road may be used for the building of a police station, civic hall, or temple.)

I am aware that, to this day, some people still regard feng shui as mere superstition. The truth is, feng shui is not superstition, but rather the study of the environment at a profound level. A beautiful environment naturally leads to beautifying the mind and spirit. When one's mind and spirit are in peace and harmony, one will succeed in one's endeavors. After all, when Mencius [a sage and student of Confucius] was a child, his mother relocated their household three times, just so she could find a perfect and beautiful environment to raise him.

What this chapter consists of are of course only the most basic principles in selecting a home site. There are many detailed and more profound principles that I will go into in the future, as the opportunities arise. It is my hope that this book will provide a clear introduction of feng shui to the readers. ■

Rules for Offering Incense

By Grand Master Sheng-yen Lu
Translated¹ by Yuan Zheng Tang

The incense that we use to make offerings to the Buddha comes from many sources — Japan, India, Tibet and Taiwan just to name a few. Since there are many kinds of incense, we have to pay attention to the quality. Certain low grades of incense may adversely affect one's health. To show one's respect to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, one should use the best grades of incense. Thus, in our daily offering, we should only use those fine grades of incense that will not generate bad effects on one's health.

In Seattle's Chinatown, I came across several shops that use strange, fake incense. They offer three sticks of incense in front of General Kwan (a guardian god). On top of each incense is a small bulb, which emits a red light when the electricity is turned on. From the traditional viewpoint, one should not use fake incense, because it is cheating the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas with fake offerings. Likewise, if one recites the name of the Buddha by means of records or tapes, then one does not recite it with one's heart. Such acts will not result in any merit.

When one lights the incense, one should not blow out the flame with one's mouth. This is because one may have impure breath, and blowing out the flame with impure breath will pollute the incense. One should instead use one's hand to put out the flame. Since many people suffer from oral diseases and have bad breath, it is always better to avoid using one's mouth to blow out the flame of all incense and candles.

Also, if the incense sticks extinguish half way through, it is better to remove the incense rather than rekindle it, for this is not a good omen. According to tradition, an incense stick should be burned from the top to the bottom. If it extinguishes

in the middle, simply throw it away.

In Taiwan, I saw people take burning incense sticks and place them upside down in the urn to extinguish them, because they had to leave for other commitments. This is a bad habit, because extinguishing an incense stick signifies that one no longer wishes to worship that Bodhisattva. To extinguish an incense means one is discharging the god. One should avoid doing this.

There is much to know about incense. I mentioned "emergency incense" before. That is when you have an urgent matter, and need to immediately entreat the help of the Bodhisattva. Normally, we light one end of the incense stick. During such an exigency, we may light both ends of the incense stick, then place the stick in the urn. The passing Bodhisattva will stop to listen to your urgent request. So there are "emergency" incense, "headless" incense (incense that is half-burned), and "discharging" incense (incense that is put upside down in the urn).

It is virtuous to offer the best quality of incense to the Buddha. Incense that is of poor quality will give off a bad smell, and may affect one's health. Therefore, it is important to know the quality of different kinds of incense.

Om Mani Padme Hum. ■



Incense Burner

¹ Translated from page 252 of **Achievement of a Rainbow Light Body Volume 6**, a book by Grand Master Lu.

Offering to the Local Ground Deity

Taught by Grand Master Sheng-Yen Lu
Translated¹ by Tim Tapping



The purpose of this practice is to present offerings in exchange for help in one's daily life. Grand Master Lu says to ask the Local Ground Deities because they are the ones who are the closest in the spirit realm to us in our daily lives. Make your wish to the Local Ground Deity for harmony, good health, fortune, prosperity of business, or progressive achievement in your Tantric Dharma practice.

Timing

Regularity in this practice is important. One promises the deity to perform once, twice, four times or more a month. Auspicious dates are the 1st and 15th or 2nd and 16th days of the lunar month. The correct time is between noon and midnight. Yin increases from noon until midnight and, since the Local Ground Deity is ruled by yin, these are the appropriate hours for this practice.

Offering Food

Prepare five dishes for the offering. Offer whatever you normally eat for dinner. Meat or fish, rice or bread, vegetables, soup, fruit, and dessert are fine. Pour three glasses of red wine. Face the stove with your back to the door.

Display

Arrange the offerings in four rows. The row closest to you has two dishes. The second row has three dishes. The third row has the three glasses of red wine. The fourth row has incense placed in a small water glass or other suitable vessel, and filled with rice or the ashes of incense.

Direction

With your back to the front door, face toward inside the house. In the kitchen, face the stove

with your back to the front door.

Procedures

1. Light five sticks of incense. The lighting of five sticks of incense establishes a path of communication for the practitioner to make a personal call to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas to consecrate and join in the practice.

2. Recite the Earth Deity Mantra. Close palms and recite the Purification Mantra from the beginning of our liturgy. Seven times say the Earth Deity Mantra ("Namo Sam-man-do Moh-Toh-nam Om Doh-lo-doh-lo, De-weh, So-ha").

3. Stamp the ground sharply with the left foot.

4. Visualize the Local Ground Deity as a well fed, elderly gentleman, with a gold or silver bowl in his left hand and a cane or staff in his right. He is a beloved family member (Santa Clause is your uncle!). He comes over to your offering.

5. Multiply the offering to fill the Universe. Bid the deity to enjoy the wine and the food that has been prepared.

6. Pray. After he has finished, humbly entreat the Local Ground Deity to listen to your request for his assistance. Make your wish clear and detailed.

7. Visualize Amitabha shining red light on the Local Ground Deity, and dedicate to him the merits of the seven recitations of the Rebirth Mantra that you now perform. Conclude the practice with "Om bu lin, Om bu lin, Om bu lin, Om mani padme hum."

8. After all five sticks of incense burn out, then you may clean the table.

Note: The Local Ground Deity rules the place where the house is actually standing. The Local Earth Deity rules an area roughly the size of a block around the house. In this practice, if one faces away from the front door, it is for the Local Ground Deity. If one faces the front door, it is for the Local Earth Deity. ■

¹ This article was first published in the True Buddha News, Issue No. 93 November 1-14, 1995.



Consort Practice

By Grand Master Sheng-yen Lu
Translated¹ by Janny Chow



Many Tantrayana students engage in Consort Practice, and I dare not say that none of our students engages in this practice. A person may feel that he is capable of doing the Consort Practice, but at the end, as a result of the Consort Practice, a child is born. [audience laughter] My God! [audience laughter] What kind of Consort Practice is this? This is just the ordinary conjugal practice between a couple, how could it be called the Consort Practice? It is an error to mistake the "married life" for the Consort Practice. An authentic Consort Practice will not give rise to any conception of a child. The birth of a child is an indication that he still has leakage of his light drops or vital essence. Such false claims of Consort Practice is an infraction of the precepts and can cause one to descend to the Vajra Hell.

Consort Practice does exist in Vajrayana Buddhism. We cannot deny its existence in the past in the Highest Tantra Section of Tibetan Vajrayana. However, the practice was so greatly abused that almost everyone was engaging in the Consort Practice. No wonder there are so many lamas. [audience laughter] Here in the state of Washington, there was also a great Tibetan lama who engaged in the Consort Practice with an American woman, and she gave birth to a little lama! Now the child is training to become a little lama in Nepal! Such a happening did occur, but it was not Consort Practice. Such a Consort Practice is a grave infraction of the Vajrayana Precepts.

The minimum requirement for Consort Practice is to first develop the conscious chi, your transport vehicle. You then elevate the light drops and

place them in the truck and send them to be accumulated at the heart chakra. This way, all the light drops from the five chakras are centralized at the heart chakra. When there is no longer any light drop at the root chakra, you can practice the Consort Practice and enter into a Great Stabilization of Ecstasy and Emptiness.

Padmasambhava himself had five female consorts. During the Consort Practice, he would enter completely into the Condition of Emptiness and abide in the Great Stabilization of Ecstasy and Emptiness. It is a kind of stabilization that can transform Ecstasy into the Condition of Emptiness: "Ecstasy is Emptiness; Emptiness is Ecstasy." [audience applause] This is a practice that benefits both participating parties. During the process of such a practice, there is no longer any movement of light drops, just the movement of chi. Through the movement of conscious chi, Ecstasy is generated and transformed into the Condition of Emptiness. When the point of complete Emptiness is reached, it will gradually transform back into Ecstasy. At the apex of Ecstasy, the condition transforms and reverts to that of Emptiness. The stability resulted from the cyclic movements between Ecstasy and Emptiness is known as the Great Stabilization of Ecstasy and Emptiness.

Not many people have knowledge of the techniques of the Consort Practice; there are also very few who are qualified to engage in this practice. Yet many people are still using Consort Practice as a pretext. Do not trust such pretexts as it can lead to conception of babies. We who can "see" the energy can see right away whether someone is qualified to do the Consort Practice -- whether there is sufficient chi in him, whether he can maneuver the chi, and whether the central channel is open. When a person does not have a truck, and his light drops are leaking, how is he then qualified to engage in the Consort Practice?

¹ This is an excerpt of a series of lectures titled An Overview of the Buddhadharma given by Grand Master Lu during May 3-10, 1993 at the Rainbow Villa in Western Washington. The first part of the article is excerpted from day 4 of the discourse. The second part of the article comes from the question and answer period on day eight.

I have given you a clear explanation of what are the prerequisites for entering into the Great Stabilization of Ecstasy and Emptiness. The first requirement is the possession of a full and sufficient chi. One has to be an adept in the practice of Chi Kung and is able to maneuver the chi to ascend or descend. With a truck in the body, one can elevate the light drops. There are techniques that involve movements of the head, body, as well as the legs. There is a certain posture the body has to get into for the elevation of the light drops. The instructions are taught to one by one's guru. If one does not have the knowledge or ability to do such a practice, one is actually doing what the Chinese proverb says: "Build a cart behind closed doors." Or, in this case, build a truck behind closed doors, [audience laughter] except that in this case, a baby, rather than a truck, is produced.

This is the difference between the Buddhadharma and conventional practices. If you do not know how to release the egotistical self and enter into the Condition of Emptiness, you will only experience "pleasure" and not Emptiness. Herein lies the problem! Therefore, the practitioner has to first realize the Nature of Emptiness and then co-ordinate it with the other element, Ecstasy, during the practice. Padmasambhava has likened this process to that of "taking the pearl from the tongue

of a poisonous snake."

There are now some people who claim that if you would pay a certain sum of money, they can open the central channel for you. With the freeway open, you can drive your truck around. Did the Buddha ever say anything to that effect? Can someone open your central channel for you? As your central channel is in your own body, you have to open it yourself. How can someone else open it for you? "How can you be so naive as to believe that it can be done by someone else?" [in Taiwanese to audience laughter] It is possible for me to give you a little boost of energy, but you yourself still have to maneuver the chi to transform it into the conscious chi. This is a key point. You still have to do your own cultivation. [audience applause]

Part 2 (See footnote 1)

[Q-65] My first question pertains to attaining the state of "non-leakage." How can the "stopping of menstrual flow" be achieved? How does one achieve the state described by the Taoist term of "conquering the dragon and tiger"? Where are the "three hun and seven pa" [a term that describes the different constituents of a person's soul] located? What are the Four Deva Kings' mantra seed syllables and their colors?

[A] Writings on the "three hun and seven pa" may be found on page 83 of my 98th book, *Transpersonal Experiences in the Ocean of Beings*. The mantras of the Four Deva Kings may be found in my 49th book, *The Method of Vajrayana*.

I shall address now the questions pertaining to "non-leakage" and "stopping of menstrual flow." It is known in Taoism or Tantric Buddhism that when one exhausts the vital essences in one's body, one dies. It is therefore best if one can achieve a state wherein there is no leakage of any of the vital essences of one's body. Simply put, males have to be able to keep light drops from leaking. Light drops include both the non-physical "wisdom light drops" and the physical "semen." For females, it would be non-physical "wisdom light drops" and the physical "menstrual blood." How does one stop these light drops from leaking? These are "internal level" practices. First, one must learn to do the



Treasure Vase Breathing to fill the whole body with a vigorous chi. Sometimes the hand can be used as a tactile guide for the movement of chi. When the finger moves upward, visualize chi also moving upward along with the finger. Eventually, the chi will move upward without any tactile guidance. By practicing the Treasure Vase Breathing, one's whole body becomes like a treasure vase filled with vigorous chi that filters down to the capillary level.

Next, chi is gathered and transformed into an inner fire that is used to burn up all those physical light drops [which would normally lead to a cascade of events resulting in end products] that are discharged from the body. The physical light drops, which are fluids, will turn into vapors when this inner combustion takes place. As vapors, they arise. When they ascend to the five chakras, they condense and turn into sariras. Internal Practices are thus methods employing chi in one's body to transport these fluids — which emerge as a result of the "inner fire" combustion process — to the five chakras.

Light drops that are about to leak can be elevated by assuming a certain body position or posture. In the tempering process, the inner fire is used to burn these light drops and transform them into vapor. The vapor will rise inside the central channel and, upon reaching the five chakras, transform into sariras.

In Taoism, this process is known as "conquering the dragon and subjugating the tiger," "non-leakage of light drops," and "cessation of the menstrual flow." It is easy to speak about this process but, in reality, in order to achieve the "non-leakage of light drops," one has to lower one's desires. The six senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and thought have to be shut off. When one is desire-free, an inner peace is sustained. Then one may practice the four steps of "lowering, elevating, sustaining, and dispersing," and use the "elevating" method to raise light drops, temper them with the inner fire, and transform them into vapor. This is also what is termed in Taoism the practice of "ching, chi, and shen." Ching transforms into chi, which transforms into shen, which then returns to the void. This is the Taoist method of cultivation to return to the Original Source.

In Tantric Buddhism, "non-leakage of light drops" is also the goal. In Vajrayana Buddhism, engaging in consort practice, while one still has leakage of light drops, constitutes a breaking of the vajrayana precepts and can cause one to descend to the vajra hell. Consort practice is engaged in vajrayana because it is an effective way to induce the lowering of the fluid known as "white bindu." While still engaging in consort practice, chi is transferred and instilled into the other party's central channel to open it up. In this process, chi is transformed through skillful means into "wisdom chi," which is used to open up the central channel. This is tantamount to helping the other party to experience the state of liberation. The circulation of chi enables the other party to enter into the same realm as one is in oneself. This is the reason why this very secret yoga is practiced in Tantric schools. However, if the female party is not able to consciously achieve cessation of menstrual flow and the male party is not able to prevent the lightdrops from leaking, then engaging in such practices can cause one to descend to the vajra hell. The successful practice of "non-leakage of lightdrops" is a minimum prerequisite before one should attempt the consort practice. Padmasambhava had five female consorts with whom he entered into sexual union practice for the above reasons. ■



What Can the True Buddha Tantric Dharma Offer Us?

(Comparing Pure Land, Zen, and Vajrayana practices)
by Living Buddha Lian-sheng
Translated¹ by Janny Chow

Masters, reverends, fellow cultivators, good evening. Today's ceremony, which invoked Amitabha Buddha as the principal Deity, was a ceremony for Bardo Deliverance, Purification, Healing, and Blessing. Each time, when we conduct a Dharma ceremony in accordance with the liturgy of the True Buddha Tantric Dharma, we feel the presence of a very strong spiritual energy. This is an indication of the remarkableness and completeness of the liturgy of the True Buddha Tantric Practice.

This is my first time conducting a Dharma ceremony in person at the Rey Tseng Waken Temple. I find everything very fresh here: a new temple, many new students, and many new faces. Although there are also many familiar faces, it is my hope that we will get to see more and more new faces. [audience applause]

Looking back at the whole course of my Buddhist cultivation, the first practice I came into contact with was the chanting of the Amitabha epithet. I was a very devoted practitioner of the Pure Land school then, and I still am. I was so dedicated that I was chanting Amitabha's name every step I walked. Even on my feng-shui consultation trips, I chanted continuously while travelling in the car. I engaged the Pure Land practice first, because Amitabha's great vows to help sentient beings have made the Pure Land practice a great and

expedient pathway.


At the time he expounded on the Amitabha Sutra, Shakyamuni Buddha said to Shariputra, "As long as one chants Amitabha's name ten times, with a mind of one-pointedness [at the time of dying], one may be reborn to the Amitabha Pure Land. Even chanting the Buddha's name for ten days will enable one to be born there." This is indeed a very expedient pathway. But, this practice of the Pure Land school mandates "faith." One must be a believer, must wish to be reborn to the Western Pure Land, and practice what the Amitabha Sutra prescribes. This is "faith, desire, and actualization." Here "desire" refers to the wish to be born to Sukhavati, Amitabha's Pure Land. That is why this is a very expedient pathway — one must have faith and follow the practices outlined in the Amitabha Sutra.

At that time, I was very devout in my chanting practice. And to this day I am still just as dedicated. People volunteering at the "corresponding office" all know that my chanting of Amitabha's name goes on even while I answer my mail. [audience applause]

Pure Land practitioners observe a relatively smaller number of precepts, which of course include the basic Buddhist Five Precepts and Ten Wholesome Acts. If, today, some of you here decide that all you want to do is just this chanting practice, you may do so. The True Buddha School does not prohibit anyone from engaging in just this practice only. You may choose this "chanting pathway" and devote yourself to chanting until the practice ripens. Then, at the moment of death, chant

¹ A Discourse given by Living Buddha Lian-sheng at the Los Angeles Rey Tseng Waken Temple in El Monte, California, on September 14th, 1996 (following an Amitabha Dharma Ceremony). Translated from the transcript published in Issue 117 of the True Buddha News (Nov. 1-14, 1996).

New York, New York



Ucchusma Empowerment
in New York
June 21-22, 1997

To celebrate the opening of the new temple in New York, Grand Master Lu will give teachings and empowerment on Ucchusma, the Dharma Protector that purifies the unclean. This is a very high empowerment that is rarely given. This is the first and only time Grand Master Lu will give this empowerment in public. Do not miss this empowerment.

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Note: This event will not be held at the temple but at a park.

the Amitabha epithet ten times without any mental perturbation and, without wavering, keep the desire to be reborn at Sukhavati. Amitabha Buddha is committed to his vows and will definitely come to guide you to the Pure Land. You have to have faith in him. You just have to keep chanting his name regardless of whatever activities you are involved in — this is the expedient pathway to rebirth in the Pure Land.

Some of you in the audience are perhaps entertaining the thought, "I think I will just practice the Pure Land chanting pathway, since it gives one such an assurance to go to the Pure Land." That is right, as I myself also practice this great chanting practice of Amitabha which is also a Vajrayana practice. There is even a longer version of Amitabha's epithet that one may chant: "Namo 36 trillion, 119 thousand, and 500 Amitabhas."

Actually, the Pure Land practice is incorporated into our True Buddha Tantric Dharma practice.

Among all the Buddhist practices, I feel that the Pure Land pathway is the most expedient one to help one achieve rebirth in the Pure Land. If one finds the True Buddha Tantric Dharma too complicated and does not want to do the Energy Yoga of chi, channels, and light drops — perhaps one's getting on in years — then one may just practice the chanting pathway. This way, one may still go to the Pure Land. This is something that I would like to bring to your attention today. If one cannot learn so many of these Vajrayana practices — perhaps one has not had much schooling and finds the practices hard to understand, or perhaps one is illiterate — in that case chanting the sacred epithet of Amitabha will serve one well.

Zen (Ch'an) is also very popular in Chinese Buddhism. I have often mentioned that, rather than being an expedient pathway, Zen is the most profound pathway. While the Pure Land practitioners rely on the power of Amitabha, who is committed to his vows to provide one guidance, Zen practitioners do not depend on any "power from others" at the time of death, relying entirely on "self power" developed during cultivation. Among the many schools in Buddhism, Zen is the most difficult, so do not think that it is the simplest. "Direct transmission of mind" and "Enlightenment through a glimpse into one's nature" are far from being simple.

Since many Zen masters do not want to rely on power from the Buddhas, there is a Zen saying: when the demons come, slaughter the demons; when the Buddhas come, slaughter the Buddhas. What did the Zen lineage master mean by this? He meant that he wanted to rely entirely on his own

strength to reach realization, as he himself is the Buddha. This is by no means a simple or easy thing to do.

The realm of Zen is basically beyond one's imagination. Zen is entirely a state of mind: let go of everything, regard everything as empty, and abide in the inherent nature of everything. Many people who practice Pure Land or Vajrayana say they are going to give up their practices and take up Zen because they think it is easier. People with such opinions are ill-informed. They think practicing Zen will be easy while, in fact, it is the most difficult. It is impossible to express Zen with any spoken or written language. Therefore, when Mahakashyapa beheld Shakyamuni Buddha holding a flower and smiling, the transmission of mind occurred. Mahakashyapa was the only one receiving the transmission of mind at that moment. He also broke into a smile, signifying the attainment of a tacit understanding in him and the union of the two minds. Although Mahakashyapa understood, no one else was able to make head nor tail of it.

This historical case of "mind transmission" has met with criticism. Some Zen masters have pointed out, "Why bother with the holding of a flower? Just looking at each other is sufficient." Others then ask, "Why even bother with looking into the eyes unless one is trying to show some disdain, or trying to charm the other person?" Zen is basically without any trace. By holding the flower, the Buddha has given himself away. There is no need for holding any flower or any other ritual, or for using any written or spoken language. Everything is inherently empty. There is only the merging of minds and the direct transformation of an ordinary mind into the mind of Enlightenment. This kind of phenomenon is called Zen, and it is not reached by climbing any ladder.

After making these observations, I came to this conclusion: the Pure Land school is just too easy and the Zen school is just too difficult! What is the best pathway then? The True Buddha Tantric Dharma is the best. In the Tantric Personal Deity Yoga practice, one invokes the Personal Deity and visualizes the blessing of the three lights — this is reliance on the Buddha's power. As long as one

achieves yogic response in the Personal Deity Yoga, I absolutely guarantee that one will secure a rebirth to the Buddha's Pure Land. I will issue you a birth certificate to the Pure Land and put an approval seal on it. [audience laughter] I won't charge you much for it — pay whatever you will. I also guarantee that a residence will be waiting there for you in the Pure Land. You won't go there and find that Grand Master Lu has neglected to provide you with real estate ownership. You won't go there by yourself and find that you don't even have a bed to claim. This won't happen.

If you succeed in your Personal Deity Yoga practice, the assurance that you will go to the Pure Land is much greater than that provided by the Pure Land chanting practice. Many practitioners of the Pure Land school, although they chant "Namo Amitabha" all the time, do not experience any psychic or yogic responses. One of them came secretly to see me, "Grand Master Lu, I have been chanting the Buddha's name for so long now, can you tell if there is any guarantee that I will be reborn to the Pure Land?" He found it odd that all these years of chanting had not brought him any spiritual response. Was he confident of his rebirth to the Pure Land? No, he had no idea. He did not have much confidence.

The practice of the Tantric Dharma, and the achieving of yogic response in your Personal Deity Yoga, will definitely enable you to see the Buddha and be liberated from the cycles of birth and death. If you are able to see the Buddha, then, when you call upon him at the moment of death, he will definitely manifest to you. That is why you will be confident of your rebirth to the Pure Land. That is exactly why the True Buddha Tantric Dharma is so excellent. [audience applause]

The light of the Buddha appearing to you during the yogic response is unique. It is not unlike the cotton candy we ate when we were small — a very fine and dense mass that spins and forms around a stick. They are very fine and close-knit fibers of light that you can tell right away have emanated from a true Buddha, and are not a figment of your imagination or a product of visual illusion. They are very fine, closely woven, and sparkling. It is a kind of light different from ordi-

nary kinds of light, and you will understand in your heart that it is indeed the Buddha. Because the true Buddha manifests, that is why our school is called the True Buddha School. [audience applause]

Many people who practice the Pure Land pathway lose confidence at the critical moment of death. Although many have chanted the Buddha's name for a very long time, their faith is shaken suddenly at the last moment. One must avoid at all cost the losing of faith.

In Tantric practice, after achieving yogic response with the Personal Deity, the Personal Deity is thereafter always in your surroundings; the Buddha is following you at any moment. Any time you want to see the Buddha's light, you only need to pray to him, and he will definitely manifest to you. Join your palms and pray to him, "Please manifest your light to bless me," and immediately you will see the light and the body of the Buddha. This is the guarantee for rebirth to the Pure Land.

As a Tantric practitioner, one must constantly pray to one's Personal Deity. I have said before: before meals I always make offerings to the Personal Deity and Dharma Protectors; before falling asleep, one must do the Sleep Light Practice and pray to the Dharma Protector, Personal Deity, and Guru to bless you with light in your sleep. One prays at night before falling asleep; one prays before breakfast, lunch, and dinner, as well as before one's evening snack. [laughter] One may have many meals to refresh one's energy, as long as not too much is consumed each time. [audience laughter] One must constantly pray to one's Personal Deity.

To be honest with you, during today's offering and prayers, if I did not know whether or not my Personal Deity and Dharma Protector had arrived, then I, Lu Sheng Yen, should slap my own mouth for telling fibs. Every single time, every meal, when I pray and make offerings to my Personal Deity and Dharma Protector, I can feel them. I have contact with them. This is absolutely the truth. [applause]

If you are able to make this happen, would you still have any worries about not being able to be reborn to the Pure Land? At the time of dying, just join your palms and pray, the same as you do

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routinely before meals. Use very simple and clear language — there is no need to use the classical language or go into the ceremonial prayer of intent: Personal Deity, please guide me; Dharma Protector, please protect and support me. Or just chanting the name of your Personal Deity will do. If you try to use your last breath to recite a long prayer, you might not make it because your pupils are already dilated and you are losing your eye-sight. If you have been interacting with your Personal Deity and Dharma Protector, making offerings to them and having contact with them, then, at this moment, they will manifest the Clear Light to guide you to the Pure Land. That is why the True Buddha Tantric Dharma is "Ichiban"! The reliance on the Buddha's power is inherent in our practice. [audience applause]

If you do not want to engage in the cultiva-

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tion of Energy Yoga, (because the practices involving chi, channels, and light drops are more difficult,) then by achieving yogic responses in the Personal Deity Yoga practice you may commune with your Personal Deity at any time and invoke him to lead you to the Pure Land. On the other hand, if you continue the practices on chi, channels, and light drops, you will have greater achievement. This is because the Energy practices develop other-power as well as one's own power. Besides invoking the Buddha's power, one's own power also will manifest.

Thus Tantric cultivation is a process that starts with the invocation of the Buddha's power and goes on to develop one's own power. While Zen only focuses on the development of self-power and the Pure Land school only relies on the Buddha's power, the Tantric pathway combines both the development of other-power and self-power. It is an excellent pathway that also gives you psychic and spiritual responses. "Yoga" is "union." When you achieve "yogic response," you will have a very strong and lucid experience. It is definitely not something that one cannot feel.

Many people doing Zen practice or sitting meditation do not experience any responses at all, even though they have been practicing for a very long time. Similarly, many people have been chanting the Buddha's name for a very long time and

are unsure if they can be reborn to the Pure Land. But, when you practice the True Buddha Tantric Dharma, once you attain "union" with your Personal Deity, you are guaranteed a rebirth in the Pure Land.

When you are always in communion with the Personal Deity during ordinary times, and you proceed to cultivate the chi, channels, and light drops practices, then more experiences will arise in the realm of psychic and subtle energy. The "bliss experience" refers to a state of "lightness and joy" that fills up one's whole body. It is a kind of joy unlike any ordinary joy. When chi moves and passes through the subtle channels in one's body, a joy and bliss is generated — this is what is called the "state of great bliss." In the next stage, since one's channels are now open, the inner fire will transform and manifest as the pure light. With light inside one's body, one may perceive and see one's own "luminous body." The "luminous body" next transforms into the "vajra chain." One will see the vajra chain and the emergence of the "Buddha Group." When the Buddha first emerges, it is sometimes in the form of a half-body. Later on, a great assembly of Buddhas emerges — the brotherhood of Buddhas is enormous, like the Lion's Club! Many Buddhas, though not hundreds of thousands of them at one time, will emerge together to empower you by shining lights on you. After drawing all these lights into your heart, you then manifest your own light from within yourself.

Just think, this union of pure lights is no ordinary light phenomenon. When it happens, you will know that you have not only secured rebirth to the Pure Land, but also attained "Buddhahood in this body." You no longer need the Buddha for guidance, as you have become the Buddha yourself! [audience applause] At this stage of Great Perfection, your own power is evident. At death, there is no need to supplicate to the external Personal Deity to give you guidance. As I have said in the past, what happens if the Personal Deity is suddenly very busy at the critical moment? What if he has to use the bathroom suddenly and cannot hear you? You would be in trouble and have to undergo transmigration again. What if you supplicate to the Dharma Protectors when they are bus-



The new Waken Rey Tseng temple in Los Angeles taken during the weekend of this Dharma talk.

ily drinking and partying? You would be finished if you had not engendered any self-power. Such scenarios are, of course, improbable, but the point here is that it is more assuring to be able to rely on one's own power.

What is being realized, at the time the internal Personal Deity manifests in one, is the realization of Zen. At such a moment, one attains Enlightenment and sees into one's own Buddha nature. The manifestation of one's own Buddha Light is Enlightenment, the highest realm of Zen. On the other hand, Buddhahood by guidance is a Pure Land pathway. The True Buddha Tantric Dharma has integrated both Pure Land and Zen into its practice. [applause]

Inherent in the True Buddha Tantric Dharma practices are Pure Land, Zen, and Tantric elements. What is "Tantra"? "Tantra" is yoga, and yoga is union. Yogic experiences, engendered during the process of practicing, allow one to become fully confident of the True Buddha Tantric Dharma — unless one does not feel anything or experience any yogic response at all.

Take the Tantric practice of fire offering as an example. Just one fire offering can result in a tremendous increase in one's yogic power. Let us say, in my case, that there are normally three Dharma Protectors in the retinue following me. After just one fire offering, the number would increase to three hundred, with an immediate escalation in one's yogic power. By performing one fire puja and doing invocation pure-heartedly, all of a sudden three hundred Dharma Protectors

emerge. This is a one hundred-fold increase in one's yogic power, based on my own experience.

At the end of a fire puja, after making offerings and praying, you will discover that the number of your Dharma Protectors has increased many-fold. This demonstrates the importance of fire puja and how it can increase one's yogic power. As long as one performs this fire offering practice with a pure heart, the powers rendered to one through the Dharma Protectors,

Personal Deity, and the Guru will all expand. This kind of yogic power is tremendous, and extremely strong. After performing one thousand fire pujas, I do not believe that one's Personal Deity would not manifest to one, bestowing a yogic response.

When you practice the Tantric fire puja and pray to the Personal Deity to commune with you, or pray to the Dharma Protectors to appear to you and for yogic response, your prayers will invoke a response from the heavens, as long as you carry out the liturgy in accordance with our True Buddha Tantric Dharma. Do not over-simplify the whole process, however. Do not just casually take a small stove the size of a bowl, burn a few incense sticks each day, and call it one fire puja practice. The fire is still burning and you go and blow it out. [audience laughter] Four drops of milk and a few woodsticks do not constitute a proper fire puja; that is just child's play. The process must be done in a dignified way. Why? Because one is inviting the devas and Personal Deities to descend to one's shrine. Therefore, one decorates the shrine majestically with many flowers. The size of the fire puja stove should be optimal, but not too big. You do not have to find a stove the size of a swimming pool [audience laughter] just because you want to have a big yogic response. That would be too excessive.

I think the size of the Japanese fire puja stove is just right — its center is neither too big nor too small. One may use lots of flowers, incense, candles, teas, and fruits to decorate the shrine to transform it into a beautiful altar. One may even offer

as many as eight, twenty-one, or up to thirty-seven kinds of offerings. When a shrine is decorated as splendidly as this shrine here [at the temple], how can the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas not descend? When the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas see how much energy has been put into creating a dignified shrine, they are pleased and descend to the shrine.

Therefore, do not invent a miniature fire puja stove [laughter] that can only hold a piece of mantra paper and a few incense sticks. Do not blow out the fire as soon as the drops of milk have been added, while the fire is still burning. This is just too childish. Of course the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas may still be moved by your sincerity and radiate a beam of light on you. You may say, "Oh Grand Master, this works, there is light from the Buddhas." That is just a beam of sympathy! [audience laughter] You overshadow the mini stove by too much when you stand up, don't you? Anyway, the stove, just like everything else in spiritual practice, should be "optimal." Please do not invent such miniature fire puja stoves. [audience laughter] Really, I hope the size of the fire puja stove is in just the right proportion to the size of the human being.

You can see that the True Buddha Tantric Dharma is an excellent pathway. It offers you fire offering practice, practices that cultivate chi, channels, and light drops, as well as the Four Preliminary Practices, Guru Yoga, and Personal Deity Yoga. There are also practices beyond these levels. You know, the channel and chi in your body are directly connected with the channel and chi of the Personal Deity. Your future light drops can be transformed into a "luminous body" that directly leads to the "luminous body" of the Universe. The entering of this "luminous body" of yours into the "luminous body" of the Universe is the phenomenon of the meeting of the "offspring and mother pure lights." What a complete practice the True Buddha Tantric Dharma is! What a perfect liturgy it is! What a lucid explanation it offers! Furthermore, after practicing the Energy Yoga of chi, channels, and light drops, the chi in your body will become full and vigorous, just as in someone who practices Chi-kung. When your channels become unblocked, pure light will be generated and lumi-

nosity will appear. After your light drops meet and merge together, they will give off light and transform into a luminous body: that is, your innate Personal Deity will manifest inside the luminous body. This is a very good method of cultivation that brings solid results, and lets you experience psychic and yogic responses. It develops both other-power and self-power. Therefore I feel that the True Buddha Tantric Dharma is a most excellent Dharma! [audience applause]

The development of both other-power and self-power, as well as yogic responses in our Vajrayana practices, will serve to strengthen our faith in them. True Buddha School students in possession of full confidence can withstand any kind of attack or slandering. Such attacks would not mean anything to you anyway, because you are confident and fearless, and nothing can trouble you. What kind of realm is this? It is a realm built upon faith, confidence, and yogic responses. No matter what happens to you, no matter where you are, you will have full confidence to shoulder everything. This is the key to the practice of the True Buddha Tantric Dharma. Go and give all of this some thought. There are so many and varied practices in the True Buddha Tantric Dharma that you may start with the simple ones and work progressively towards the more profound ones. This way, you will attain accomplishments. You can also tell other people about the benefits of learning and practicing the True Buddha Tantric Dharma, so that we can all reach Enlightenment together. ■



The "Live Long and Prosper" Mudra as revealed by Mr. Spock (USS Enterprise) circa 23rd century.

(Note: For non-Star trek fans, this is a cartoon.)

THE ANNOTATED TRUE BUDDHA SUTRA (CONT.)

by Grand Master Sheng-yen Lu
Translated¹ by Janny Chow

The White Padmakumara, silently calling forth his spiritual power, transformed the Maha Twin Lotus Ponds into an extraordinarily splendid place filled with golden light. All the flower-buds simultaneously burst into fragrant blossoms. Jade grasses sent forth a wonderful scent. White cranes, peacocks, parrots, saris, kalavinkas, and jivajiras all took on a golden hue, and sang graceful, heavenly songs in harmony.

The White Padmakumara silently called forth his spiritual power. This is a wonderful usage of the word "silently" because spiritual power is, after all, invisible and inherently present in all of nature's transformations. Clouds in the sky transform into water through their spiritual power. Through its spiritual power, water transforms into ice. Ice transforms through its spiritual power into water. The spiritual power of water again causes itself to transform into vapor. All these various transformations are manifestations of the spiritual powers of nature.

A person who possesses spiritual power may cause changes in the material world. He can cause clouds to turn into rain, rain into ice, and ice into vapor. All these transformations are just natural manifestations and "a silent calling forth of the spiritual power."

In reality, many housewives are already "silently calling forth their spiritual powers" when they prepare meals in their homes. First one goes to the supermarket to buy a fish, the kind that is quite cheap, with a nauseating fishy smell. Then

one comes home and starts marinating the fish in soy sauce, vinegar, sugar, and green onion. The fish is then fried in fragrant oil. In an instant a foul-smelling fish is "silently transformed through spiritual power" into an "aromatic fish." After such aromatic food is consumed by each of us, it again undergoes "silent transformation," turning back into something that is as foul as it was before.

Vegetable growers use fertilizers. Some use organic and others use chemical fertilizers. But even the chemical fertilizers use ingredients such as nitrogen urea and amino acids, which are manufactured or derived from organic sources. The Universe is a miraculous recycler. When the filthiest and most foul smelling substances are fed to plants, fish, fowl, or mammals, they become nourishment for growth and expansion. The filthiest materials give rise to the most fragrant things, which in turn produce the most foul smelling substances. The foul are fed into the aromatic and the aromatic are fed again into the foul. They mutually nourish each other. If one sees this relationship, one will understand that the underlying principle of the Universe is an ongoing cycle of transformation, a "silent manifestation of spiritual power" through the phenomenal world.

Everyone has the potential to cultivate to the state where one is attuned with Nature. In this achieved condition, one may "silently call forth spiritual power" to act in accordance with or even bring forth transformations in Nature. Such powers are spiritual powers.

We know that X-rays can penetrate the human body to provide a picture of the bones and organs inside. When one's eyes develop an X-ray like ability, one obtains the faculty of divine sight. A person with divine sight can aim his or her eyes at a space satellite and watch the live-action Ol-

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, WA, USA. The True Buddha Sutra text was translated by Janny Chow, K.C. Ng, and Kender Taylor.

ympic gymnastic competitions. Images transmitted from the Olympic venues to the satellite will be deflected to one's eyes, and a person with divine sight can watch gymnastic events thousands of miles away.

If we want to talk to a friend in Taiwan, Singapore, or India, we just pick up the telephone and dial the number. If one develops divine hearing, the ears become like a line that extends all the way to the mouth of the friend. One may hear a friend's conversation without picking up the telephone. The development of such abilities is not impossible and is entirely dependent on the "silently calling forth" of mysterious and wonderful faculties. How is "silently calling forth" accomplished? It is achieved by completely quieting down until the deepest level of consciousness is reached. The moment the self reaches the most quiescent and fundamental level of consciousness, it is transmuted into Emptiness. At that moment, one is in a state of attunement with all powers, and the greatest spiritual or miraculous power occurs.

In the future you can learn to create this miracle. For example, say there is a flower bud in front of you and, by silently calling forth your mysterious and wonderful power, you command the bud to bloom. If you can do this, you can transform the world into an extraordinarily beautiful and splendid place. A person with great transcendental powers can even cause changes in the weather. It is autumn as I speak, and the weather is turning colder and most flowers are withering. A person with spiritual power can change fall into spring. It is fall or winter on Earth when the light and heat of the sun have to travel a greater distance to reach the Earth. By "silently calling forth the spiritual power," and slightly altering the angle between the sun and the Earth, one can transform fall or winter into spring or summer, making it so warm that one starts to perspire. In reality, even a slight shift of the Earth's position in relationship to the sun will result in a complete alteration of the climate on Earth.

With silently calling forth the spiritual power, "all the flower-buds simultaneously burst into fragrant blossoms." As mentioned earlier, with a gesture, all flowers opened into full blooms. Next time

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I will teach you how to perform this miracle. The student who is a florist is happiest about this! With this miracle that I can teach you, your flowers will stay open without withering. But then this may not be such a good idea either, since people, after buying flowers once, won't need to buy any more for the whole year. Then your flowers won't sell either. I think it is better that you do not learn this kind of miracle.

"The White Padmakumara, silently calling forth his spiritual power, transformed the Maha Twin Lotus Ponds into an extraordinarily splendid place filled with golden light. All the flower-buds simultaneously burst into fragrant blossoms. Jade grasses sent forth a wonderful scent." In an instant, all flowers burst into blooms and all grasses released wonderful fragrances.

"White cranes, peacocks, parrots, saris, kalavinkas, and jivajiras all took on a golden hue, and sang graceful, heavenly songs in harmony." Why do these birds take on a golden hue? Because gold signifies the highest value! "Graceful, heavenly songs in harmony" refers to the most peace-



Grand Master Lu's agenda for his visit to the Bay area is as follows:

June 13 Evening talk at PLS (Free)

June 14 Evening dinner party (\$25)

June 15 Opening of the Purple Lotus University (Free)

June 16-18 3 day teaching - New Realm of the Buddha King (Free) Limited seating - priority given to refuge students who have been working on the Four Preliminary Practices. Pre-registration required. (Fee by donation)

June 19 Dinner Party (\$40)

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ful, elegant, and melodious sound.

I have said before that the harmonious and graceful, heavenly music found in the Western Paradise is a very powerful kind of music. Just imagine, in the future many people in this world will be going to the Western Paradise, and not all of them will have their karmic hindrances completely eradicated. These people are able to be reborn in the Western Paradise, but they still have some obscurity in them. Since these people are not completely free of egotistic desires, will they covet or steal the beautiful things they find in the Paradise? Isn't this going to pose a risk to the celestial maidens in the Western Paradise?

Such a worry is unwarranted because of the existence of the harmonious and graceful, heavenly music. "Oh, what exquisite jewels, I must take some with me!" As soon as this thought occurs, the harmonious and graceful, heavenly music will

flow into one's inner being, and the desire to steal will vanish. A sacredness will well up inside one's heart, "I am a holy person, how could I take these things?" When one's lusts are raging like fire, this harmonious and graceful, heavenly music will pour down upon one's head like cold water. This most beautiful, pure, and transparent ice cold water will rinse away the filthy thoughts in one's mind. Some individuals who arrive at the Western Paradise may still be emotionally attached to their spouses, children, and money. Although they have been reborn in the Pure Land and cannot go back to the world, they still worry over unresolved business there. In any case, as soon as they hear this harmonious and graceful, heavenly music, all of these troubling thoughts will disappear.

The harmonious and graceful, heavenly music is a very beautiful and wonderful realm of consciousness. Some people have homicidal tendencies within themselves. Sometimes, under stress, they want to kill others. When these people of strong destructive tendencies arrive at the Western Paradise and hear the harmonious and graceful, heavenly music, they will not want to kill. All thoughts of theft, lust, and even murder will be transformed by this music. Therefore, this harmonious and graceful, heavenly music has a most sacred and wonderful cleansing effect.

I have said before, there is sadness in the human world. Why is the Western Paradise called the Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss? Because one is always in a blissful state there. As long as one hears the harmonious and graceful, heavenly music which flows through one's heart, all emotional afflictions will vanish and all of the cells in one's body will dance to the music. Once this dancing starts, it cannot be stopped. This is the reason behind "Ultimate Bliss."

Someone asked me, "Grand Master, such a soothing piece of music sounds really nice. But wouldn't one get tired of it if the same piece of music is played over and over again?" Do not worry, there are billions of pieces of harmonious and graceful, heavenly music in the Western Paradise. I assure you that you will never exhaust them all. Your lifespan there will be measureless and the music of "Ultimate Bliss" is endless. ■

A Meeting Between Grand Master Lu and His Holiness the Dalai Lama

Reported by Rev. Lian Lian from Dharmasala, India
Translated by Judy Lee

On November 12th, 1996 at 2:30 p.m., Grand Master Lu and His Holiness the Dalai Lama met for the first time. The meeting took place in HH Dalai Lama's general meeting room, and lasted about thirty minutes. Both were formally introduced and exchanged firm handshakes. Afterwards, the two holy men were escorted to the reception room, where Grand Master Lu presented the Dalai Lama with the traditional hada.

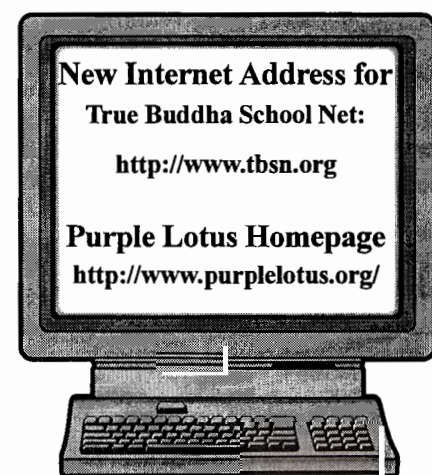
Grand Master Lu and HH Dalai Lama discussed Tantric Dharma, exchanging their vast knowledge of the subject. Through the translator, Grand Master Lu briefly introduced the True Buddha School, and told him of the thirty temples which have been established, the three hundred Buddhist chapters, and the over four million disciples from around the world. Grand Master Lu also stated the reasons for his visit to India, which included visits to the eight famous holy sites, as well as various Tantric shrines and sites. Grand Master Lu also said that he had heard of a Tantric temple in South India which might be in need of some financial assistance. Grand Master Lu wanted to know how he could personally help by visiting the area.

Grand Master Lu briefly shared with the Dalai Lama the history of his cultivation and practice in the various levels of achievement in the many lineages of Tantric Dharma. Some of those included were Kagyupa's Mahamudra, Gelugpa's Yamantaka Dharma Protector, Sakyapa's Great Perfect Victorious Wisdom, and Nyingmapa's Great Perfection. His Holiness the Dalai Lama was

very interested in Grand Master Lu's cultivation and achievement, even having his personal assistant postpone some other scheduled engagements so not to interrupt the meeting. Some of the subjects HH Dalai Lama wished to discuss were: which sutras and Tantras had the Grand Master studied? What is the main point of the three treatises of Nagarjuna? How did comparable practices in various Tantric schools differ? Finally, the Dalai Lama and the Grand Master exchanged their personal experiences on the phenomena accompanying the practice of the Stabilization of Bliss and Emptiness, and the phenomena that arise during the two levels of Great Perfection Practice.

The Dalai Lama favorably received Grand Master Lu and the information he offered. This included the information about the True Buddha School and of the Grand Master's personal achievements in knowledge and cultivation. Before Grand Master Lu's departure, the Grand Master presented the Dalai Lama with

a beautiful, pure gold Sanskrit syllable from Grand Master Lu's Heart Mantra. In return, His Holiness the Dalai Lama presented Grand Master Lu and those in attendance with His traditional hada. ■



¹ This article first appeared in the True Buddha News No. 119, Dec. 1-14, 1996. This article has been revised by Janny Chow and Pamela Ziv Johnson.



A Trip To India

A talk by Grand Master Lu
Translated¹ by Janny Chow

Masters, reverends, fellow cultivators, good evening. We have just heard Rev. Lian-chuan talk about the events that led up to her ordination, and also listened to Rev. Lian-tu talk about how he came to take refuge and, later, the ordination vow. These are quite straightforward accounts, so I will not elaborate on them. However, since I have just returned from India and Nepal yesterday, I will talk about this trip and share some of my insights with you.

Before leaving for the trip, I prayed to the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Dakas, and Dharma Protectors at the Ling Shen Ching Tze Temple, True Buddha Tantric Quarter, Rainbow Villa, as well as at my residence by Phantom Lake, to join us in the trip. That is, whenever I ran into one of them, I would say, "Let's go and visit India!" [laughter] They are invisible and need no airplane tickets, so my inviting them would not incur any extra expenses [laughter]. So, whenever I came upon a Deity, I would extend my invitation, "Hey! Let's go together and have some fun!"

Therefore, although only eighteen of us masters and reverends went on the trip, numerous Dharma Protectors, Sky Dancers, and devas were, in reality, keeping us company and providing protection along the way. I would actually know in advance events that were to take place the next day. They followed us and briefed us wherever we were staying, so everything turned out to be very auspicious and successful. As this was a trip to India and Nepal, there could have been obstacles and difficulties but, through briefings from the Dharma Protectors, everything turned out very well. So I would first like to thank the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Dakas, and Dharma Protectors for

their guidance and support for making this a very safe trip. [audience applause]

You all know that during this period of time, two airplanes collided in midair above the New Delhi Airport. We were quite terrified when we heard the news [laughter]. Even though we are Buddhists, it was hard to dismiss from our thoughts the possibility of such an incident happening to us. From the time we left until our return, we took more than a dozen flights. During that time, there also seems to have been a plane which crashed into the Indian Ocean. Safety is always a major concern when one travels. During this trip, the condition of the roads was so bad that riding in a car was like rocking in a boat. One could actually witness cars flipping over right in front of one's eyes. The Dharma Protectors helped us through many such dangerous situations.

There were several main reasons for this trip. The first was to pay a visit to the Dalai Lama at Dharamsala in North India. It was my first meeting with the Dalai Lama. Secondly, there are three famous monasteries in South India: Drepung Loseling Monastery, Ganden Sokpa Monastery, and Sera Monastery. We visited both Drepung Loseling and Ganden Sokpa Monasteries. At Drepung Loseling Monastery, I was invited to take the teaching seat, where I delivered a talk to 1500-2000 lamas. Drepung Loseling, Ganden Sokpa, and Sera are regarded as the three great monasteries of Tibet, and not many individuals are invited to take the teaching throne to give a talk. Generally, unless one is very highly regarded, it is not possible for one to ascend to the teaching throne at Drepung Loseling Monastery to give a discourse.

We also visited many other sites. In Nepal we went to a monastery called Karma Lekshey Ling. The visit was totally unplanned, and the abbot of the monastery, Ghltzen Lama, honored me with a "bed sitting" ceremony. What is "bed sit-

¹ A talk given by Grand Master Lu at the Ling Shen Ching Tze Temple in Redmond, Washington, on Nov. 30, 1996. Translated from the Chinese transcript published in Issue 55 of The Purple Lotus (Chinese edition).

ting"? After a person has been recognized as a reincarnated tulku, the "bed sitting" ritual is performed to mark this official recognition. [audience applause] Some of our masters were unfamiliar with this ritual and said to me, "Grand Master, they want you to go to bed!" [laughter] The bed was huge, with special decorations, and it had a Dharma chair placed in front of it. At first we were going to leave after the tea, but Rinpoche Ghltsen invited me to do the "bed sitting" ceremony. Only when a special Dharma chair is used is it called the "bed sitting," which bestows official recognition on the reincarnated tulku.

Apart from these three major events, we also visited the eight holy sites at which Buddha Shakyamuni stayed from the time he was born until his nirvana.

India is a very poor country and we knew before our trip to be cautious with its water, salad, and many foods. There is a saying, "If one can stay healthy in India, one will absolutely have no problem when travelling anywhere else in the world." Therefore, before the trip, my seventeen fellow cultivators in the group all went to get their

shots, six shots each. Master Lian-hsiang said, "Oh the shots! One here, one there, one here, one there, one here, one there! Just like doing the Macarena!" [audience laughter] She said that, not I. [laughter]

I was the only one who didn't go for any shots. [audience applause] Not that I did not want to take precautions, it is just that I have always been afraid of shots, even as a child! [audience laughter] But, as it turned out, I was the only person who did not get ill! [audience laughter and applause] The rest of our group suffered headaches and stomach aches. There is a place in India called Varanasi and we all started calling it "Wan-le-la-hsi [I am done in with diarrhea]" instead!

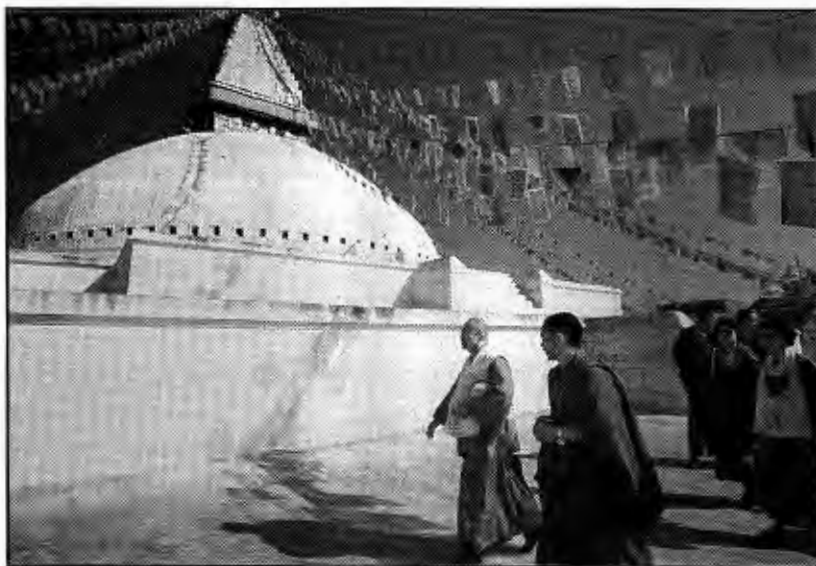
Many of the group demonstrated "Wan-le-la-hsi" right from the beginning [audience laughter] and continued until we reached Hong Kong on our return trip. Then it was Master Lian-hsiang's turn to do the "Wan-le-la-hsi"! [laughter] It was a good thing that they were well prepared. Besides the six shots, they also packed many medicines with them, including the strongest kind. How did the strongest medicine work? It was supposed to act like a plug for the bottom [audience laughter],

like using a cork from a wine bottle.

If it was one person with diarrhea one day, it would be another the next day. Everyone was afraid to eat the food. I was the only one having a good time eating! [audience laughter and applause] I finished everything each meal. Why? I had a secret formula. I used alcohol. [laughter] Before each meal I drank a little hard liquor to kill the germs. [audience laughter] There were indeed germs. One even had to avoid using tap water for brushing one's teeth, we used distilled



HH Lving Buddha Lian-shneg and Master Lian-hsiang with Abbot (second from the right) and lamas of the Drepung Loseling Monastery.



HH Living Buddha Lian-sheng at the Great White Stupa in Nepal.

water instead.

I have said before that the air and water here in Seattle are of very good quality. Visiting India, was like placing a fish, that is used to swimming in very clean water, into a dirty-water ditch. The fish is going to turn upside down right away. The air there was also impossible! After going out, (I should not say "digging one's nostrils" as it sounds unsanitary), we cleaned our nostrils, and black stuff like the burnt end of a cigarette came out. It was a very dirty and poor place, with dust everywhere. Seattle was like heaven after the trip to India.

I met with the Dalai Lama and conversed with him for thirty minutes. The Dharma Protectors had told me ahead of time what I would run into, but I was not afraid. While there, the Dalai Lama asked me many questions which I answered. When it was my turn to ask him questions, he stood up. [laughter and applause]

The Dalai Lama kept asking me questions, one after another, and I kept answering them. He asked some pretty tough questions, relating to Tantric practice. The questions might have rendered another person mute, but my answers elicited only nods from him. So he kept asking and I kept answering, until finally it was my turn to ask and for him to be stumped, and he stood up. [audience laughter and applause]

I was going to ask him two questions. What

were they? First, what was the difference between Sukhavati and the Avatamsaka Pure Land? You can all give this question some thought now. Second, since the Dalai Lama had given many ceremonies and teachings on Kalachakra, I wanted to ask him about the door of Kalachakra. What was it made of and what shape was it? What symbols were on it? How many more doors were there after entering the Kalachakra door? I was going to ask him these questions, but he knew he probably could not answer them, so he quickly

stood up. Well, I let that go. Those are difficult questions because only direct experiences could have provided one with the answers.

He also asked me some difficult questions! What are the two key realms of Great Perfection? "Trekcho and Togel," I replied, "cut through and spontaneous, perfect accomplishment." What are the four stages of Maha Mudra? "At the first stage, the light drops emerge; at the second stage, the vajra chains emerge; at the third stage, the Buddha Body emerges; at the fourth stage, the Pure Land emerges." What are the three treaties of Nagarjuna? "The Hundred Verses (Satasastra), the Middle (Madhyamika sastra), and the Twelve Doors (Dvadasanikaya sastra)." What is the Hundred Prajna of Nagarjuna? "That is just another name for the Hundred Verses."

I had to be able to answer those questions, as they demonstrated my basic Buddhist knowledge. One has to be familiar with the works of past gurus, such as Nagarjuna, Vasubandhu, Asvaghosa, and Dignaga. A face-to-face test of this sort could have given somebody else a hard time but, since the Dharma Protectors were helping me, the Dalai Lama kept nodding to my replies. Things turned out very well, katas were offered, and we took pictures together. When the picture is developed and enlarged, we can hang it up there.

It is unheard of for a Chinese monk to take

the teaching seat and give a discourse in front of more than of a thousand people at Drepung Loseling Monastery. The Tibetans consider Tantric Buddhism part of their heritage. They are very proud of their Tantric practices and regard them as high-level teachings, which are closely guarded and not easily transmitted to outsiders. A Chinese monk, sitting on the teaching throne and giving such a discourse to more than to a thousand lamas just has not happened before. So, when the picture comes back, we will have it hung over there.

The "bed sitting" ceremony performed for me marked recognition that a tulku had incarnated as a Chinese. In the past, tulkus were all Tibetans. As so many Tibetans are now living in exile, there will be the appearance of more living Buddhas in the West. One does not casually invite just anybody for a "bed sitting" ceremony. When I arrived at the place of Rinpoche Ghltse and when he, the abbot, saw me, he invited me to have a "bed sitting" ceremony. At the ceremony, I said to him, "You come and sit next to me." He said, "I can't!" He was afraid to sit by my side and stayed far away at a corner of the bed. When that picture is developed, we will have it hung over there! [laughter and audience laughter]

We gained a lot on this trip. By observing the life of the lamas at the three great monasteries in south India, we should learn to cherish our own situation and work harder on our practices. Really, their living conditions are very poor. I will just discuss the aspect of food. They arise every morning at 5:30 a.m., have lunch at 11:30 a.m., and dinner at 5:30 p.m.. Breakfast consists of a small Indian biscuit and a cup of Indian tea, which is not even buttered tea. What is buttered tea? Butter and tea [audience laughter] and a little salt. Indian tea is tea with milk and sugar. Lunch is a larger biscuit and a cup of buttered tea. At dinner, they have either a bowl of rice or of noodles, with only one kind of vegetable. That is all. The same fare every day. If Rev. Lian-chi had gone there to become a monk, he would have starved to death a long time ago. [laughter and audience laughter] Where could he find such big bowls of white, steamed rice at mealtime? Just one bowl of rice and one vegetable and that is already the best meal

of the day.

The cost of living for each monk is twenty U.S. dollars per month which covers all meal costs. The twenty dollars is not supplied by the monastery! One has to find a sponsor, and the money is then turned over to the monastery. Money collected this way is used to house and feed the lamas, unlike here where lodging and food are free, and meals invariably consist of at least a soup plus anywhere from three to five (or even more) different dishes. When I saw the way the lamas lived, I felt very bad. We eat so well here. That in itself is not an issue; however, what is at issue is that work is not even done here and people fuss over their responsibilities. Over there, provisions are not free, and monks have to find a way to pay for themselves. Their foods are simply one biscuit, one cup of tea, one bowl of rice, and one kind of vegetable. That is why most of the monks there in south India are very skinny.

The climate in south India is very warm. It is, however, necessary to be briefed on the weather before one travels. After she came back from her last trip to south India, Master Lian-zhi uttered, "It's so cold!" Since she said it was very cold, [audience laughter] we took some winter clothing with us. I brought two quilted jackets and one overcoat. [laughter and audience laughter] After arriving there, I was perspiring with even an undershirt on! [audience laughter] We had been misinformed. Perhaps she had meant that it was warm in India and cold in Seattle. [laughter] In the future before travelling, we have to make sure that we are correctly informed. Some of the things I took with me on the trip turned out to be useful, while others were inappropriate. Some of the information given to us was wrong.

Travelling can be quite arduous. Hotels we stayed at, which were five-star hotels twenty years ago, had slipped to one or two stars, the kind that are without any light. The lobbies exuded a smell and, as soon as the bedroom door was opened, a strong, bad odor rushed out. After sleeping on a bed sheet with stain marks like a map, I heard that Master Lian-man developed many swellings on his body. From then on, many problems started appearing. First one person started having "Wan-le-

la-hsi," then another, and from then on, it was non-stop.

In north India we visited Dharamsala. In south India we visited two of the three famous monasteries, and the eight holy sites of Buddha Shakyamuni, which were spread over a large geographical area. Of course the intent of our trip to the eight holy sites was one of pilgrimage, so it was one which had to be undertaken, no matter how unpleasant. The time we spent in the car each day varied from at least seven to more than ten hours. I heard that Master Lian-deng was wearing disposable underwear made specially for travelling. As that underwear was triangular in shape, I preferred to wear my own boxer shorts, for I am more old fashioned. [audience laughter] He was more open-minded, so he wore the bikini style which was made out of paper. You know, after sitting in the car and being rocked for seven to nine hours, [audience laughter] when he stood up, shreds of paper started fluttering from under his robe. [audience uproar of laughter] It was indeed very unpleasant for him! [audience uproar] Master Lian-miu [Master Lian-deng's wife] couldn't help but quip, "Lian-deng, you might as well not wear any at all!" [audience uproar] So this was one of the interludes on the road.

Long car trips of up to twenty hours are common occurrences in India. So, after driving for a

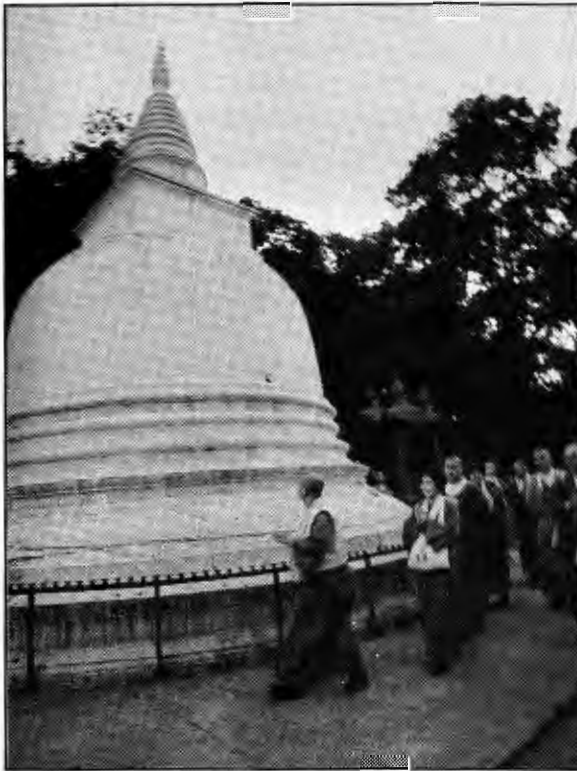
while, the driver suddenly pulls over to the roadside. What happens then? With umbrellas in hand, the men rush out to the right side and the women to the left side. [audience laughter] Make sure you don't go to the wrong side! They say umbrellas are used for beating the snakes (there are many snakes in India), for shielding oneself from the sun, as well as for shielding oneself under such a circumstance. [audience laughter]

The men ran to one side, and the women ran to another. Lian-tzi also ran to the women's side and, as there happened to be a wall right in her direction, she hurried. I have heard that, at the time of the Buddha, the ground of the Jetavana resort where he had delivered many teachings was laid of gold. [audience laughter] Master Lian-tzi was faster and ahead of everybody else, so she arrived at a place that was "laid with gold." [audience laughter] She put her foot down and it was slippery, just like stepping on a piece of cake! [audience uproar] The several ladies following her started teasing her, "The cake you have stepped on was still fresh!" Master Lian-tzi tried to save her shoe by having it wrapped inside a plastic bag, which she brought back onto the tour bus. The whole car started protesting, "What are you trying to do? Do you want all of us to inhale that smell?" [audience laughter] They wanted her to throw it away, as she had an extra pair of shoes. Other people

have also stepped on the "gold." It is easy to step on such a "booby trap" if one is not paying attention. Do not think that it is uncommon for people to casually urinate or defecate there on the roadside; it happens all the time because there are hardly any public restrooms or sanitary facilities. If you find a place that can provide some kind of shelter for you, you may be sure that the same thought will have occurred to other people. [audience uproar] You think no one is going to see you behind the wall, but that is where you are going to find piles of it. It is just simple reasoning.



HH Living Buddha Lian-sheng in front of the State Museum of Nepal.



HH Living Buddha Lian-sheng led the group to chant and circumambulate the stupa three times in Nepal.

At the place you think is the safest and most hidden, you will step on the "booby trap" as soon as you put your foot down. During this trip of ours, there were "booby traps" everywhere.

There are many strange sights in India as well as in Nepal. There are beggars everywhere. Whenever one got out of the car, beggars would follow you around the whole time. If you took out five rupees, four hands would at once be reaching out to you. That kind of begging scene brought to mind the existence of the realms of hells and hungry ghosts here on earth. One could not help but feel sorry for them. Our current living conditions, in comparison to theirs, are indeed heaven-like. If one were not there oneself to see it, one could not imagine the kind of poverty and suffering they live in. You have the opportunity to do spiritual cultivation here at a nice place, so you should practice vigorously and do not waste your time.

I have found in India a lack of will to make changes in many areas. For example, in the restrooms at Indian airports, hotels, and other

places, the urinals in the men's rooms are very high. At first when I went into the men's room and saw how high the urinals were, [audience laughter] I was baffled. I had to stand on tiptoe. The Indians themselves are not that much taller than I, so why had they designed their urinals this high? Later I found out that the reason could be traced to the days of colonial rule by the British; the urinals had originally been made for the height of the British. Westerners are taller, so the urinals are just right for them, but are too high for us. India has been independent for so long now, yet they continue to install the same size urinals as before. From this example, one may see a lack of energy and a reluctance to improve. Improvement is needed. I have travelled around the world and have never come across a urinal that high. Someone made a joke about that, but I cannot repeat it here at the temple. It would not be appropriate.

Every day in India we had the same foods, which we referred to as the "common feed." That is, the same fried rice or fried noodles everytime. It really didn't matter. But people from the West would have a hard time getting used to the foods, long travelling hours, poor road conditions, and an abundance of beggars.

Talking about road traffic, Seattle's is much better than Taiwan's, while India's is terrible. There were cows, goats, camels, even elephants walking on the streets. Cows were ubiquitous. Beef is forbidden for Hindus, so no beefsteak for us during the twenty-something days we were there! [audience laughter] Also no pork, because the Moslems do not eat pork. India's population is mostly either Hindu or Moslem, so what was available to us was rice, noodles, chicken, and mutton, which was rather tough in texture.

Why is beef prohibited in Hinduism? The Hindus revere and worship cows, as Shiva, the Hindu deity of the force of destruction, rides a cow. This is also partly why one has to remove one's shoes before entering a Hindu temple. It would be disconcerting to Shiva's ride to see one wearing shoes made from cowhide.

Like India, Nepal is also a Hindu country. It was once part of India, prior to Nepal's independence. Therefore, one of the eight holy sites,

Lumbini, is located in Nepal. The other seven sites are located at the border area between India and Nepal. While at Sarnath, the place where the Buddha first turned the Wheel of Dharma, I gave a talk to our group on the Four Noble Truths. After Sarnath, we went to Bodhgaya where Buddha Shakyamuni attained Enlightenment under a bodhi tree. At each site we visited, psychic messages were revealed to us. We next stopped at the Spiritual Vulture Peak (Rajgir), a place referred to in the offering prayer chanted every morning at our temple: Nammo Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the Spiritual Peak Assembly. We finally arrived there, the place where the Buddha had discoursed on the Lotus Sutra. There is one well-known verse, "Do not seek after the Buddha in the faraway Spiritual Vulture Peak, as the Peak is right in your own mind." This time the Spiritual Vulture Peak was not just in our minds, we had arrived there.

When the Buddha gave the talk on the Lotus Sutra, several thousand people were present in the assembly. On arrival, I took a look at the place and saw that it could, at most, accommodate around two hundred people. So, where had the rest of the people been seated? We can only say that they were hanging over the trees or the rocks. The platform at the Spiritual Vulture Peak is quite small, about a quarter of the size of the Ling Shen Ching Tze

Temple. Only about two hundred people could squeeze in there, the rest would have to hang onto the slope. You may go and see this for yourself. There you may visit the cave in which Mahakashyapa and five others stayed. You may go to look at the caves where Ananda and Shariputra meditated. At those places, you will feel as if you are in a dream. The Bamboo-grove Vihara and the Buddha's bath are also located there. Before arriving there I had told our group, "There were two baths, one cold and one hot. One was clean and one not so clean. There was another upper hidden pool where the Buddha took his bath by himself." When we got up there, it was exactly as I had described. [applause] The Buddha only bathed in the company of two other people. I don't have to tell you who they were. [laughs]

After visiting all of the above places, we went to Jetavana Grove and then Kushinagar. At Kushinagar, the place where the Buddha entered into Nirvana, we saw flowers fluttering and descending from the spiritual realm, covering up the whole body of the Buddha. Someone also saw the eye of the Buddha opening up again, signifying that the Buddha is still in samsara, and helping many people.

Finally we arrived at Lumbini, the birthplace of the Buddha, and the spiritual energy there was the strongest. While in Nepal, we visited many Tibetan temples, as well as the cave where our lineage guru, Padmasambhava, meditated. Inside the cave, when we pictured Padmasambhava meditating there, reverence and admiration spontaneously welled up inside our hearts. Looking out from the cave I realized what a powerful site it was. It may not be obvious to others, but in feng-



Kasur Jigme L. Rinpoche welcoming HH Living Buddha Lian-sheng.

shui terms, it is known as "the green dragon taking the pearl." The landform consists of a round hill cradled by a curved arm on each side. The cave where Padmasambhava did his retreat faces the round hill — it is exactly the pattern of "the green dragon taking the pearl."

This illustrates the great importance of selecting a land of strong earth energy in which to do one's practice. The Ling Shen Ching Tze Temple also sits on land with great earth energy. Perhaps, in the future, our temple may even be referred to as one of the thirty-six best places on Earth to do spiritual cultivation. Here many practitioners can undergo training to become great adepts in the future. [applause]

There are many places in Nepal worth visiting. I plan to write a travelogue recording our visit to north India, south India, Nepal, and the eight holy sites of the Buddha. It will be called "White Clouds over India." I have not started yet. Since tomorrow is Sunday, I shall start writing the first chapter on Monday morning.

"White Clouds over India" is a very poetic title; however, in reality, the clouds over India are

quite dark. Indeed, it dawned on me why so many people in old India sought spiritual cultivation and why there were so many yogis. Perhaps material deficiency and poverty drove them to seek the alternative of spiritual liberation. Why were they able to sit so well in a full-lotus position? Perhaps there was nothing else for them to do. We saw many people just sitting inside thatched huts with legs crossed, looking bored. When our bus rolled by, we could see people sitting cross-legged next to market stalls, on the roadside, and inside grass huts. They looked like natural-born spiritual cultivators and arhats, sitting leisurely and properly in meditating postures, because there were no jobs and they were unemployed.

That is why, in our eyes, India is a fascinating country. The philosophical and metaphysical accomplishments in the fields of spirituality and religion have come about under pressures from a very harsh set of environments, and thus the people's hopes and emphasis have been placed on their future lifetimes. This contrasts sharply with the mental outlook of the contemporary West. Difficult and harsh living environments may engender

a desire to seek spiritual emancipation, and the consequence of this is a spark of spiritual growth.

We can discuss more about this subject in the future. But, you should cherish the life afforded you here to do cultivation. The living conditions of the Tibetan monks in south India are very harsh. We must feel blessed to be here, and we must cherish this opportunity.

This concludes our general discussion of our trip to India.

Om Mani Padme Hum. ■



HH Lving Buddha Lian-sheng and True Buddha School Masters paying homage to the site where Buddha Shakyamuni attained Enlightenment in Bodhgaya.

True Buddha! Oh, True Buddha!

By Grand Master Lu

Translated¹ by the Toronto Translation Group and edited by the Purple Lotus Translation Team

Having accumulated repeated deficits, business was poor for a Chinese gentleman operating a restaurant in Dallas, Texas. Despite the gentleman's efforts, few customers came, and sometimes the restaurant only made a hundred dollars business a whole day. Paying for the expensive rental of the building was impossible. In agony, the gentleman wished to sell the restaurant for a substantially reduced price. Yet, after several negotiations, no deal had been made — he felt exhausted.

One day, the failing business had left him with no way out. Holding a stick of incense, he faced the Ground Deity which was enshrined at his restaurant, and muttered his prayer, "Oh Ground Deity! Please help me. Let's sell the restaurant cheap quickly! Please, I sincerely pray to the Ground Deity for help." (Usually an altar for the Ground Deity is set up on the floor in most Chinese restaurants in America.)

After praying, he sat on a dining chair and racked his brains again trying to resolve his difficulties. In a short while, he fell asleep.

In his dream, he saw an old man, carrying a staff approach him.

"Why did you pray to me for help?"

"My back is against the wall. Please help me," the owner begged.

"Oh! It's hard. It's really hard," the old man said shaking his head.

"Please, please help me!"

"True Buddha! Oh True Buddha!"

After the old man had uttered these words, he vanished. At the same moment, the owner, waking up from his dream, also shouted "True Buddha! Oh True Buddha." Two waiters hearing the owner loudly call out, came over and asked, "Are

you OK? Why did you shout out 'True Buddha'?" The owner recounted the dream to them.

"Maybe it is a name of someone."

"True Buddha, True Buddha. That's strange. Is there any temple in Dallas called True Buddha?"

They talked for a while but were still puzzled.

Among them, a foreign student working temporarily in the restaurant said, "There is a Living Buddha Sheng-yen Lu, who has established a Buddhist denomination in Redmond, Washington. I hear that he is currently teaching Buddhism and has already gotten over a hundred thousand students. Oh yeah! His denomination I think is called True Buddha."

The owner eventually obtained information about the True Buddha School. He heard of various anecdotes and mysteries about the Living Buddha Sheng-yen Lu as well. He had made an appointment and came to Seattle to see me. Upon meeting me, the honest owner told me about his strange dream, adding that he was especially instructed by the Ground Deity.

The restaurant owner said, "Living Buddha Lian-sheng, please have mercy and rescue me and my whole family. I've failed many times in my life. I will soon dissipate my fortune if I falter again. I hope to sell my restaurant for a low price as soon as possible and wish that a more fortunate individual will take over the business thus solving all my troubles."

"OK," I promised, "I decide to perform a seven day Tantric practice for you and your restaurant. It is a "magnetization" Tantric practice which will call and attract those who are interested in your restaurant to come forward to you, so that your restaurant will be sold quickly."

The owner then thanked me many times.

Amazingly, on the third day of the practice,

¹ Translated from chapter 20 of "The Gentle Light of Grace," the 64th book by Grand Master Lu.



that is the second day after the owner had returned to Dallas, someone came and inquired about his business. They made a deal and signed it that same day. Never

before had a business deal been made so quickly. In short, this buyer who wanted to engage in restaurant business was satisfied with everything in the restaurant. He didn't even make any negotiation and considered the asking price a bargain. The new buyer simply called his lawyer to come over and settle the transaction that day.

Ecstatic and astounded, the owner exclaimed how miraculous the Tantric magnetization practice is.

He wished to advertise a thank-you note in the newspaper. However, I told him not to do so as I was already busy writing replies to countless letters from my students. I have even had to politely decline visitors, except on special occasions, when I may see just one or two. I am not a business man; rather I am a Buddhist devoted in propagating Buddhism. I do not want anyone to misconstrue that I am a professional consultant in solving people's problems.

Then the owner asked me how could he express his gratitude.

I replied, "Chant the name of Buddha everyday because the True Buddha helped you."

I, Living Buddha Lian-sheng, chant the Buddhas' names for all sentient beings every day. Hopefully, the Buddhas will give them wisdom and abundance, allowing devotees to resolve all their problems. I like to see people progress, clearly know themselves and merge with the deities which then allows them to help others.

For those practicing Tantric Dharma, they need to understand and comprehend the secret essence of the Universe along with making vows and having mercy. They can then attain a higher state of happiness by entering into a wonderful state of samadhi. We welcome people to take refuge in, and learn Buddhism. Oh True Buddha! Oh True Buddha! For those who want to understand the secret of the spiritual practice of the True Buddha School, they must further their mind to comprehend the Truth of the Universe, generate the mind of Enlightenment for the welfare of sentient beings, and vow with compassion to liberate sentient beings from sufferings. They can then attain the highest state of happiness and be able to enter into the samadhi of the True Buddha. This is the greatest accomplishment that one can make.

We welcome people to take refuge in, and learn Buddhism.

True Buddha! Oh True Buddha! ■

Taoist Magic Square

4	9	2
3	5	7
8	1	6

The Taoist Magic Square is another way to display the Hu Tu diagram (shown in the last issue on pg. 27). The Magic Square shows how the yin (even numbers) and yang energies (odd numbers) remain constant — whatever direction taken on the square, the number always adds up to the same total, fifteen.

Purple Lotus Schedule

Daily Schedule

Mornings everyday at 7:30 am: Repentance Practice
 Evenings except Tues. and Sat. at 4 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

Apr. 22 Maha Cundi's B'day (Tues)
 Apr 29 Matzu's B'day (Tues)

May 2 PLS's Anniversary (Fri)
 May 3 Intensive Tantric Practice at PLU (Union City) (Sat)
 May 10 Manjushri's B'day (Sat)
 May 14 Shakyamuni's B'day (Wed)

Jun 14 Welcoming Dinner for Grand Master Lu (\$25)
 Jun 15 Opening Ceremony of the Purple Lotus Univ.
 Jun 16-18 Buddha King's Realm Teaching (Free)

Jun 18 Birthday dinner party for Grand Master Lu (\$40)
 Jun 19-23 Ucchusma Empowerment in New York
 Jun 21 Padmakumara's B'day (Sat)

Jul 7 Dharma Protector Wei-To's B'day (Mon)
 Jul 23 Kuan Yin's Enlightenment (Wed)
 Jul 28 Temple Guardian's B'day

Aug 12 Padmasambhava B'day (Tues)
 Aug 17 Purple Lotus Mid-year Bardo Ceremony (Sun)
 Aug 20 Golden Mother's B'day (Wed)
 Aug 21 Planet God's B'day (Thur)
 Aug 30-Sept. 1 Annual Bardo Ceremony in Redmond
 (PLS will be closed)

Sept 1 Ksitigarbha's B'day (Mon)
 Sept 1 Partial Solar Eclipse-Akasagarbha Practice (Mon)
 Sept 5 Yellow Jambhala's B'day
 Sept 16 Total Lunar Eclipse- Akasagarbha practice
 (Tues)

Schedule subject to change. Please call PLS to confirm

Donation Acknowledgments

The Purple Lotus Journal is able to spread the Dharma through the kind donation of various individuals. This meritorious act creates a positive affinity with the Buddhas. One may also donate in the name of another sentient being such as one's family, friends, or local earth spirits. All donations are tax deductible.

\$100 Yeu Teng-Merit for my attached spirits and karmic enemies.
 \$100 Wai Hin Teo for late wife Tan Chor Huay.
 \$80 Francis Sanai
 \$30 Robert S Hale
 \$30 Yukai Feng for Suna Yu
 \$28 Shantika C. Lamanno
 \$22 Darr L Williams
 \$20 Ridwan Limantoro
 \$20 Christene Shantika Lamanno for Cindy Lichtman-May the Planet Earth and all her people be healed.
 \$20 Jay Rosenkraz
 \$20 Larry Piersa
 \$20 Kate Henderson- For my husband, Michael, who has just taken refuge.
 \$10 Celeste Graham
 \$10 Carla Krehbiel
 \$10 Justine Herbert- To the hand and the heart.
 \$10 John Leslie Burrus for transcending light
 \$10 Eric Hammond-For mother's attached spirits (sister's

job)
 \$10 Loretta-Please help me to have a better life, a good job, and money to pay my bills, and good health for me and my kids.
 \$10 Helen Lee for Lian Hua E. Lian-May she recover quickly.
 \$10 Eliza Z. Hill for Bobbie E. Hill Success for my daughter, Bobbie, and a job position for me and success for the Network marketing firm I just joined.
 \$8 Lian Hua Josephine
 \$7 Ellen Hsu
 \$6 Leonard John Bilicki
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by Master Sheng-yen Lu

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Having penetrated the depth of the Buddhadharma, Master Lu extracts the essence of the vast Buddhadharma and presents it in a very systematic and orderly manner. (This book will be due out in June 1997.)

The Inner World of the Lake

by Master Sheng-yen Lu

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About Grand Master Lu

- ♦ Master Sheng-yen Lu is a prominent religious figure throughout Southeast Asia. As of 1997, 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.

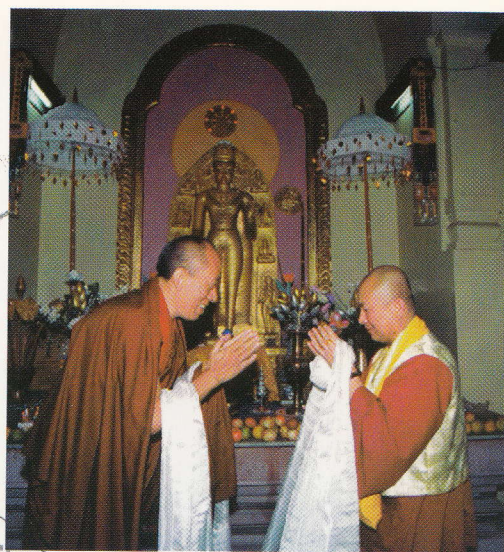
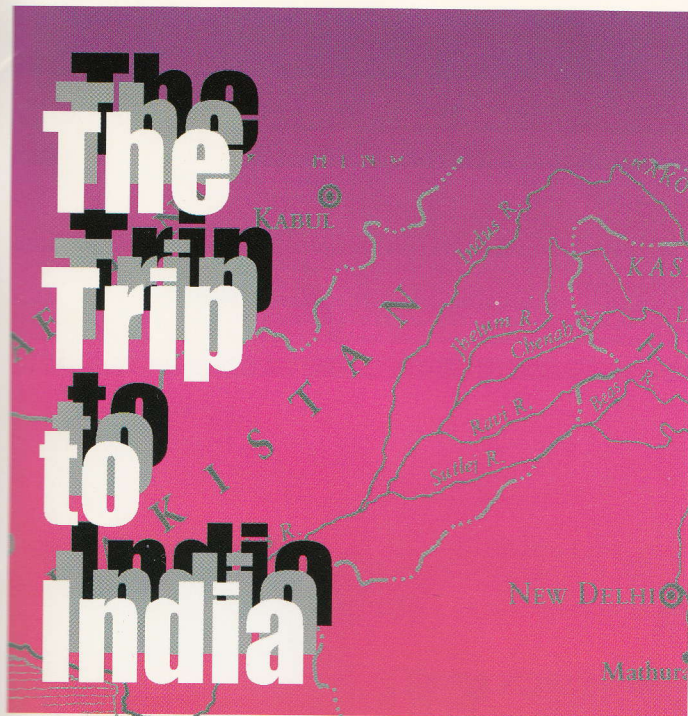
A student who takes refuge from a distance, after performing the rites at home, only needs to send a letter to the True Buddha Tantric Quarter stating that he/she is seeking refuge, together with his/her name, address, age, and any amount of offering to the Buddhas. Upon receiving the letter, Master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

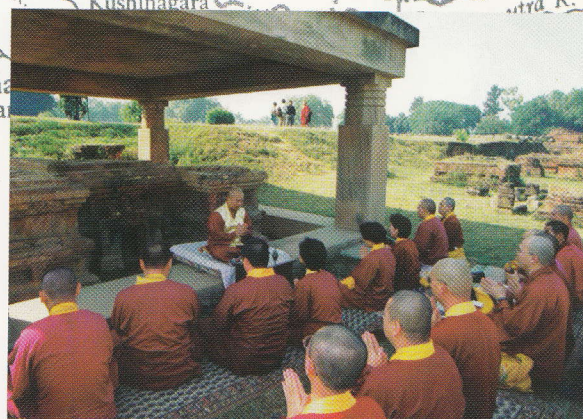
The Trip to India



● Living Buddha Lian-sheng and Amchok Rinpoche exchanging katas at the Great Bodhi Monastery



● Finally arriving at the Ganges, a place frequently referred to in the sutra.



● Living Buddha Lian-sheng giving a discourse at the Deer Park at Mrgadava



Living Buddha Lian-sheng at Kusinagara, the place where Buddha Shakyamuni died.



The Trip to India



Living Buddha Lian-sheng with the Tibetan
Lamas at the Drepung Loselling Monastery
on 11/15/96

