



The Path to True Happiness

By
Master Chin Kung



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What is Buddhism?

- Buddhism is the most profound and wholesome education directed by the Buddha toward all people.
- The content in Buddha Shakyamuni's forty-nine years of teaching describes the true reality of life and the universe. Life refers to oneself, universe refers to our living environment. The teachings directly relate to our own lives and surroundings.
- Those who possess a complete and proper understanding of life and the universe are called Buddhas or Bodhisattvas. Those who lack the understanding are called ordinary people.
- Cultivation is changing the way we think, speak and act toward people and matters from an erroneous way to a proper way.
- The guideline for cultivation is understanding/awakening, proper views and purity. Understanding/awakening is without delusion, proper views is without deviation, and purity is without pollution. This can be achieved by practicing the Three Learnings of self-discipline, concentration and wisdom.
- The Three Basic Conditions are the foundation of cultivation and study. When interacting with people, accord with the Six Harmonies and when dealing with society, practice the Six Principles. Follow the ten lessons taught by Universal Worthy Bodhisattva and dedicate one's mind to everlasting purity and brightness. These complete the purpose of the Buddha's teachings.

Buddhism is an Education, Not A Religion

Webster's Dictionary defines religion as, "An organized system of beliefs, rites and celebrations centered on a supernatural being power; belief pursued with devotion." Buddhism is not a religion because, first, the Buddha is not a "supernatural being power." The Buddha is simply a person who has reached Complete Understanding of the reality of life and the universe. Life refers to us and universe refers to our living environment. The Buddha taught that all beings possess the same ability within to reach Complete Understanding of themselves

and their environment and to free themselves from all sufferings, thus attaining utmost happiness. All beings can become Buddhas and all beings and the Buddha are equal in nature. The Buddha is not a God, but a teacher, who teaches us the way to restore Wisdom and Understanding by conquering the greed, anger and ignorance which blind us at the present moment. Buddha is a Sanskrit word meaning, "Wisdom, Awareness/Understanding." We call the founder of Buddhism, Buddha Shakyamuni, the "Original Teacher." He has attained Complete Understanding and Wisdom of life and the universe. Buddhism is his education to us; it is his teaching that shines the way to Buddhahood.

Second, Buddhism is not a religion because "belief" in the Buddha's teachings is not blind belief, blind faith and far from superstition. Buddha Shakyamuni taught us not to blindly believe what he told us, he wants us to try the teachings and prove them for ourselves. The Buddha wants us to know not merely believe. The Buddha's teachings flow from his own experience of the way to understand the true reality of life and the universe, and show us a path of our own to experience the truth for ourselves. This is much like a good friend telling us of his trip to Europe, the sights he has seen, and the way to go there to see for ourselves. The Buddha uses a perfectly scientific way of showing us reality in its true form.

Third, Buddhism is not a religion because all the "rites and celebrations" are not centered on a supernatural being, but rather on the people attending the assemblies. The ceremonies and celebrations in Buddhism all serve an educational purpose, a reminder of the Buddha's teachings and encouragement to all students who practice them. For example, the Thousand Buddhas Repentance Ceremony practiced during Chinese New Year is to help the participants cultivate a humble heart and respect for others. The point of all "ceremonies" is to help others awaken from delusion and return to Wisdom and Understanding.

Finally, Buddhism is not a religion because the "devotion" used in Buddhism is not one based on emotion, but one based on reason. Students of the Buddha are dedicated to their practice of maintaining Purity of Mind because this practice brings true happiness and to helping others and society attain complete understanding and wisdom. Only through complete understanding and wisdom can we realize our true selves and living environment. The Buddha's education is truly not a religion but an education, teaching us the way to break through ignorance and arrive at a perfect understanding of ourselves and everything around us.

Our goal is True Happiness.

The Teachings of Venerable Master Chin Kung

· Buddhism is an education, not a religion. We do not worship the Buddha, we respect him as a teacher. His teachings enable us to escape from suffering and attain happiness.

· What does Buddha mean? "Buddha" means enlightenment/understanding. Complete understanding is when one realizes the truth about life and the universe. It is when one is apart from all delusions.

· Cultivation is practiced in our everyday life. We should not see it as something unusual, it is simply changing our-selves for the better.

· To keep our mind pure and at peace is like keeping a pond clean and undisturbed. When the water is clear and still, it can reflect the sky, sun and trees just as they are, without distortion. Our mind is the same. When we are polluted by greed, anger, ignorance and disturbed by discriminations and attachments, we distort our picture of reality and fail to see things as they are. Wrong perceptions of reality can prevent us from enjoying a clear and happy life.

· We can learn to turn the light around, reflect upon ourselves and smooth our mind-pond still. Everything outside of us is non-discriminatory. The garbage does not feel it is unclean and the flower does not know it is fragrant. We must let our mind be at peace and without attachments, this is true happiness.

· There is a lot of music in our society now that promotes violence, greed and hatred. To maintain a peaceful mind, we should refrain from listening to these the best we can.

· Anyone who still harbors arrogance, a self, deters oneself from receiving the true benefits of the Buddha's teachings.

· What is purity? Purity is apart from defilement. Defilement is the greed, anger and ignorance present in our minds. Cultivation is cleansing these impurities from our hearts.

· Cultivation is not something unusual, but part of our everyday life. Whenever we recognize and correct our faults, we are cultivating.

· How do we know when our cultivation has improved? The time comes when we begin to understand the sutras more deeply, when we can read between the lines and realize the true meaning of the Buddha's teachings. This is when our cultivation has improved.

- "What goes around comes around." "Treat others the way we would like to be treated." If we want world peace for future generations and ourselves we should refrain from erroneous acts and cultivate kindness.
- To be mindful of the Buddha is to dwell in true wisdom.
- The ultimate goal to which all methods of cultivation lead is the complete pure and non-discriminatory mind. It is our original nature, our Buddha-nature.
- Success is reached only after over-coming great obstacles.
- The Buddha's teachings should be introduced as an education, not a religion. Using spiritual penetrations and psychic abilities to attract people to believe in Buddhism is not the proper teaching and only serves to mislead others.
- We should not be afraid to see our faults and mistakes because only then can they be corrected. People who fail to see their own mistakes will not be able to change for the better.
- A student of the Buddha does not just read Buddhist texts, but studies them to reach a deeper understanding of life and the universe and puts the teachings into practice in everyday life.
- Seeing another's fault is the greatest fault in itself.
- In putting the teachings into practice, the first thing we should cultivate is the Pure Heart. The Pure Heart is a mind without discrimination or attachments. We must also develop proper understanding by listening to lectures on the Buddha's teachings.
- We should treat all people with respect and sincerity and be responsible for our actions and careful when handling other's property. Be conservative with speech and actions to avoid harming others.
- Listen more: speak less.
- Filial piety and respect are the roots of good conduct.
- It is best to be considerate and kind in our speech. To put down another person is only proving our own arrogance and lack of self-confidence to others.
- The root of people's sufferings and sicknesses is discrimination and attachment to unrealistic things. The Buddha's teachings tell us how to detach ourselves and not to discriminate. If we listen and

practice according to the teachings, we will be at great ease in this world of confusion.

- The difference between the success and failure of cultivation lies in our learning attitude. We need to be humble, sincere, and respectful and not think we are better than others.

- To often criticize others is not a good matter. We should instead try to see their good points.

- Practicing virtue is to keep a kind heart, speak kind words and do kind acts to benefit others.

- Cultivating a sincere, pure, non-discriminatory, great compassionate heart enables one to attain enlightenment.

- At a place of proper cultivation, everyone is equally important as the Teacher provides guidance and fellow students support each other along the path.

- We would do well to rely upon fellow cultivators to correct our faults. If we cannot accept criticism from others, we will never reach attainment in our cultivation.

- Learn to use time wisely. When dealing with people and matters, be clear of what we are going to do from beginning to end and not waste time dawdling around. If time is used wisely, there will be plenty of time left to practice diligence.

- When we live together at a place of proper cultivation, we must be mutually respectful as well as harmonious.

- The Buddha helps those who have affinity with him. The question of affinity rests in whether the person accepts the teachings or not. The Buddha's compassion and teachings extend over all living beings, just as the sun shines evenly over the great earth. Those who hide in the shade cannot receive the benefits of the sunshine, just as those who cover themselves in ignorance cannot benefit from the Buddha's teachings.

- We should truly believe in the existence of heaven and hell. If we practice kind deeds, our future will be in heaven. If we commit evil acts, our future will be in hell.

- When we are jealous of others, we only harm ourselves in the process.

- Wisdom is essential if we truly wish to propagate the Teachings and benefit living beings. Do not use emotions when helping others,

use wisdom and be reasonable. If we use emotions when dealing with people and matters, it often makes a good thing go bad.

- A wise mind is like a mirror, reflecting and perceiving everything clearly, without distortion.

- A student of the Buddha strictly abides by the moral codes, the laws of the nation and society, and disciplines himself/herself in the teachings of the Buddha.

- As our teacher, the Buddha himself took care of the old and sick, and was mindful and ever ready to help all beings in need. The Buddha's conduct showed unconditional compassion, setting a great example for us to follow.

- Life is short and fragile, why not cultivate kindness instead of committing acts which cause harm to living beings and to oneself?

- Be constantly mindful of people worried by afflictions and bring forth the heart to help them. Learn to tie good affinities with others and always be friendly.

- To help others is to help ourselves.

- To respect others is to respect ourselves.

- People who deceive others may some-day still feel remorseful and can be saved from hell, but those who deceive themselves have no way of escaping at all.

- If people would sincerely accrue virtues and practice kind deeds, disasters and calamities can either be reduced or eliminated depending upon the degree of sincerity and kind deeds practiced.

- The key to success is diligence.

- The different methods prescribed by the Buddha come from the different needs of living beings. The methods spring forth naturally from the pure, unwavering heart of the Buddha, without the slightest difficulty.

- The Pure Land method of cultivation is the most difficult to believe and easiest to practice.

- A cultivator can be compared to a worm eating its way out of a bamboo tree. When he practices other cultivation methods, he is like a worm eating his way up, taking a long time and tedious effort. If he practices the Pure Land method, it is like he is eating his way sideways through the bamboo. He will attain liberation in a short time with lighter effort.

- Initially, the Buddha teaches us how to be a good person, and ultimately, a completely understanding being exactly like the Buddha.
- True virtue and proper conduct are necessary factors in cultivation. If one cannot practice what one teaches, then regardless of how much one knows, they all become useless at the end of his life.
- Peace of the world is based on peace in the family.
- Our goal in studying Buddhism and cultivation is to attain complete under-standing of life and the universe.
- When helping others, we should think about benefiting the entire society or even the world instead of limiting our help to just the ones we love. Expanding the boundaries of our care for others makes our lives more meaningful, full of freedom and happiness.
- Buddhas and Bodhisattvas treat all living beings as they would treat themselves. Unlike us, they do not discriminate between themselves and others. Their compassion is non-discriminating and they do not expect anything in return for their labors.
- Disasters appear according to people's thoughts. If we want to turn the tide of destiny, we must first turn our thoughts toward kindness and compassion. We can become vegetarians, refrain from killing to cultivate compassion and constantly be mindful of the Buddha's teachings.
- Worries arise from the mind. It would be wise to not let things worry us. Nothing and no one can make us worry without our permission.
- Accord with the people around us. Do not let our personality get in the way of our relationships with other people.
- Do not worry over worldly matters.
- Not only, should we be modest when reciting the Buddha's name, we should be modest when doing anything!
- Our hearts find peace when we under-stand the law of cause and effect: "What goes around, comes around." We would cease to blame others for our own misfortunes because we would be aware of the fact that we brought it upon ourselves. When our heart is at peace, we develop concentration, and with concentration, wisdom comes forth. Wisdom is the key to changing our lives for the better because for only with wisdom can we see true reality.

- If we wish to bring peace to the world, we must start by changing our erroneous ways. World peace stems from inner peace.

- The ancients often taught of the way to reach attainment through a vase analogy. A conceited cultivator is like a vase filled to the rim with stagnant water, unable to receive a drop of the true teachings. A cultivator who still holds his own stubborn viewpoints is like an unwashed vase, any true teachings given to him would instantly be contaminated. A cultivator who accepts the teachings but does not put it into practice is like a vase with a hole in the bottom, everything it receives just leaks right back out again. We can learn to not only accept the teachings with a pure, humble heart but to truly put them into practice. Only through this way are we really worth the teachings we hold.

- We must cleanse ourselves of greed, anger and ignorance. These three poisons are the roots behind all our sufferings.

- True love is indiscriminating, unattaching and unconditional, we should share this love with all beings. This is called compassion.

- Living the Buddha's teachings is to fill our lives with utmost wisdom and happiness.

- In Christianity, faith in God is foremost. In Buddhism, faith in oneself is foremost.

- We must learn to "let go" and not be too stubborn with our viewpoints. If this goal can be achieved, then we will be at great ease and live a happy, fulfilling life.

- Sufferings arise due to our unawareness and misunderstandings of our environment and ourselves.

- Buddhism is a teaching of wisdom.

- It would be wise to be conservative in what we use and be content with what we have.

- Everybody is somebody we can learn from. When we see the virtues of others, we should adopt them as our own. When we see the wrongs of others, we should reflect upon ourselves for the same faults.

- Buddhism is a teaching that shows us how to live a happy, fulfilling and content life.

- The purpose of the Buddha's teachings is to eradicate superstition and clear up people's misunderstandings about life.

- It would be wise to remember that our lives are getting shorter by the second.
- Our goal of cultivation is to attain true happiness. True happiness is undiminishing happiness, withstanding the test of time and conditions.
- Love can turn into hate. We may dislike something we adored yesterday. We should see things with eyes of equality and not let emotions control our lives.
- Treat people sincerely. We should mean what we say and truly be sincere from the bottom of our hearts.
- For the health of our body, we should keep it moving. In taking care of our mind, we should keep it at peace. Exercise and peace of mind are the key to living a happy, fulfilling life.
- We must be in control of our body and mind, and not let them hinder our ability to enjoy life.
- Wise people do not harbor feelings of gain or loss. In this way, they often dwell in the joy of possessing great peace of mind.
- When we encounter a person or a situation we do not like, it is the perfect opportunity for us to practice patience and cultivate a pure and compassionate heart.
- If we learn to forgive, we will dwell in peace of mind.
- A good student of the Buddha is open-minded.
- We show our gratitude to those who have shown us kindness, such as parents, teachers, and even society. Everyone in society is interdependent and interrelated, thus, we practice good deeds to repay them.
- Regardless of what we do, it is best to not give rise to anger.
- Wisdom springs from Purity of Mind.
- Having hearts like still water in a pond would enable us to reflect the teachings properly. The Buddha is constantly teaching, we cannot hear it because our mind is not still. We would do well to soothe our mind by clearing it of scattered thoughts.
- True cultivation is reciting Buddha Amitabha's name in modesty.

- How many people recognize the kindness shown by parents? Usually, people do not realize until they themselves become parents or lose their parents. We show our gratitude through practicing filial piety by being responsible, considerate and compliant to our parents wishes.
- We should not simply recite the sutra, but understand the meaning, put it into practice and experience the truth.
- We truly benefit from the Buddha's teachings when they are put into practice in everyday life.
- In Buddhism, love is based on wisdom. This is called compassion.
- To be a poor, content and happy person is better than being one who is rich, worried and afflicted with greed.
- Wise people do not just see matters from the surface, they contemplate them thoroughly and see to the truth.
- A genuine heart is one without discriminations or attachments.
- The point of practicing giving and charity is to forsake greed, anger, ignorance and arrogance.
- Everything in the Buddha's teachings can be used in everyday life, we would do well to live the teachings and attain true happiness.

Taking Refuge in the Triple Jewels

What is Taking Refuge?

Taking Refuge means to "return and rely." From where do we return from and to what do we rely upon? When we take refuge in the Buddha, we are returning from our deluded state of mind and relying upon an Awakened, Understanding mind. When we take refuge in the Dharma, we are returning from deviant views and relying upon proper views and understanding. When we take refuge in the Sangha, we are returning from pollution and disharmony and relying upon Purity of Mind and the Six Principles of Harmony. Taking refuge in the Triple Jewels restores the complete wisdom and abilities of our Self-Nature. We will attain purity, equality, honesty, contentment, compassion and overall, true happiness.

THE BUDDHA JEWEL

"Buddha" is a Sanskrit word meaning "Awareness and Understanding." When we take refuge in the Buddha, we vow to return from blind faith and delusion and rely upon Understanding and Awareness as a way of life. We are not relying upon the statues or Buddha-images, but rather the spirit of understanding and awareness they represent.

As students of the Pure Land Teachings, we learn to rely upon Buddha Amitabha's lessons on wisdom and compassion. The name "Amitabha" stands for Infinite Light and Infinite Life. When we follow his teachings, we will attain wisdom, happiness and longevity.

This is taking refuge in the Buddha.

THE DHARMA JEWEL

"Dharma" means "Right Understanding and Views." Delusion has obstructed us from seeing the true face of people and the reality behind matters and objects. This has caused us to look at life and the universe in a distorted and deviant way. When delusion is cleared and our minds are pure to an extent, we give rise to wisdom. With wisdom, we are able to see all people and matters completely and clearly. When our hearts are pure, we can see the past, present and future. Only when we have clearly seen the whole can our viewpoint and understanding be considered right.

The Buddha's mind is pure without the slightest pollution and therefore sees everything clearly and entirely. We can rely upon the sutras, which are the recorded teachings of the Buddha, because they speak entirely of the truths the Buddha has seen. They teach and show us the way to attain Purity of Mind, to see life and the universe most clearly and become just like the Buddhas.

As students of the Pure Land Teachings, we should rely upon the five Sutras and one commentary of the Pure Land as guidelines of practice:

1. The Buddha Speaks of the Infinite Life Sutra of Adornment, Purity, Equality and Enlightenment of the Mahayana School.
2. The Amitabha Sutra
3. The Visualization Sutra
4. The Chapter of Universal Worthy Bodhisattva's Conduct and Vows

5. The Chapter on the Foremost Attainment of Great Strength Bodhisattva through Buddha Recitation

6. Vasubandhu Bodhisattva's Report on the Way to Reaching the Pure Land

This is taking refuge in the Dharma.

THE SANGHA JEWEL

"Sangha" means "purity and harmony." Today's world is full of pollution; pollution of mind, spirit, views and body. Even the earth and atmosphere are hazardly polluted. The Buddha taught, "The environment changes according to our state of mind." We would do well to return from all these pollutants and rely upon Purity of Mind, for it is the key to saving our Earth.

There is also great disharmony in our world today, among spouses, families, friends, societies and countries which has brought us much suffering and many disasters. The Buddha taught us to rely upon the Six Principles of Living in Harmony to establish harmonious relationships between others and ourselves.

As students of the Pure Land Teachings, we rely upon wisdom and compassion as our way of treating others and dealing with affairs. Great Strength Bodhisattva represents wisdom. His choice of the Buddha Recitation method of practice is wisdom in its highest form. Guan Yin Bodhisattva represents compassion; when we help introduce the Pure Land Teachings to others, we are practicing the compassion of Guan Yin Bodhisattva.

This is taking refuge in the Sangha.

To the Buddha I return and rely,

*returning from delusions and
relying upon Awareness and Understanding.*

*To the Dharma I return and rely,
returning from erroneous views and
relying upon Proper Views and
Understanding.*

*To the Sangha I return and rely,
returning from pollution and disharmony and relying upon Purity of
Mind and the*

Six Principles of Harmony.

The Teachings of Great Master Yin Guang

Whether a lay or a left home person, one needs to respect elders and be harmonious with those around him/her. One endures what others cannot and practices what others cannot achieve. One should labor on behalf of others and help them to succeed in their undertakings. While sitting quietly, one reflects upon one's own faults. When chatting with friends do not discuss the rights and wrongs of others. In every action one makes, whether dressing or eating, from dawn to dusk and dusk to dawn, one recites the Buddha's name. Aside from Buddha name recitation, whether reciting quietly or silently, one does not give rise to improper thoughts. If wandering thoughts arise, one immediately dismisses them. Constantly maintain a humble and repentant heart; even if one has upheld true cultivation, one still feels their practice is shallow and never boasts. One should mind one's own business and not the business of others. Only see the good examples of others instead of their shortcomings. One would do well to see oneself as ordinary and everyone else as Bodhisattvas. If one can cultivate according to these teachings, one is sure to reach the Western Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss.

Homage to Amitabha! Amitabha!

True Sincerity
toward others

Purity of Mind
within

Equality
in everything we see

Proper Understanding
of ourselves and our environment

Compassion
by helping others in a wise, unemotional and unconditional way

See Through
to the truth of impermanence

Let Go
of all wandering thoughts and attachments

Attain Freedom
of mind and spirit

Accord With Conditions
go along with the environment

Be Mindful of Buddha Amitabha
following his Teachings and vowing to reach the Western Pure Land



The Dharma Protector Bodhisattva



Transference of Merit

*May the Merits and Virtues accrued from
this work,
Adorn the Buddhas' Pure Lands,
Repaying the Four Kinds of Kindness
above,
And aiding those suffering in the paths
below.*

*May those who see and hear of this,
All bring forth the resolve of Bodhi,
And when this retribution body is over,
Be born together in Ultimate Bliss.*

