

IAB Honoree of the Year 1999

For a life-time of exceptional contributions to the advancement of study and education, practice and propagation of Buddhism through devout and dedicated identification with the highest ideals of leading humanity to harmony, peace, and enlightenment, and through the establishment of a worldwide network of Temples, Centers of Higher Learning and Monastic and Lay Institutions for the achievement of such ideals, the International Academy of Buddhism of Hsi Lai University, Los Angeles County, California, USA recognizes Venerable Grand Master Dr. Hsing Yun as Honoree of the Year 1999 at the First International Conference on Humanistic Buddhism on December 16, 1999.



Grand Master Dr. Hsing Yun

Introduction

A major step taken by the University in promoting the dissemination of Buddhism with special reference to Grand Master Hsing Yun's concepts and interpretation of Humanistic Buddhism was the creation of the International Academy of Buddhism (IAB) on January 1, 1999. It was organized as an integral part of the University and complements the academic study of Buddhism in all its traditions and comparative religious studies of the University's Department of Religious Studies. Its operational plans for the year 1999 included the organization of the First International Conference on Humanistic Buddhism; the preparation of the Inaugural Volume of the Hsi Lai Journal of Humanistic Buddhism (HLJHB); the grant of fellowship to research scholar; and the recognition of a Buddhist scholar of exceptional eminence as the Honoree of the Year. It is with justifiable pride and pleasure that I announce the full accomplishment of the IAB Plan within the specified time limits.

The First International Conference on Humanistic Buddhism proceeded smoothly and successfully towards a fulfilling conclusion. During four days, a representative body of Buddhist scholars from USA, UK, China, Korea, Taiwan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Vietnam shared their knowledge and ideas, inspired each other, and explored concepts and insights in a wide variety of fields related to Buddhism. A pre-publication issue of this journal served as the basic documentation for the Conference.

The Journal which is to be published annually will be linked to the Conference. The next issue in January 2001, will have the Plenary Session papers of the Second Conference, besides a full report of the First Conference and enlarged versions of papers presented in Panels. In addition, each issue will contain book reviews, queries addressed to scholars, announcements, and recent publications in Buddhist Studies. It is hoped that the Journal would serve the international community of Buddhist scholars as well as students and the general public as an effective forum for communication.

At the concluding session of the Conference the International Academy of Buddhism presented the Honoree of the Year Award to Grand Master Hsing Yun. He does not need an introduction to the Chinese speaking world or the students of Chinese Buddhism. His contribution to the study and education, practice and propagation of Buddhism through his devout and dedicated identification with the highest ideals of Buddha is worthy of our recognition and admiration. The international community of Buddhist scholars owes him a high measure of gratitude for what he has already done. He is still actively engaged in promoting in-depth research into the Buddha's teachings and Buddhist philosophy.

The Grand Master Hsing Yun was born in 1927 in Jiangdu, Jiangsu Province, China. He renounced family life to become a Buddhist novice at the age of twelve, and later became a monk after taking the required precepts. He traveled and learned from several well-known, large Buddhist monasteries that included several sects. He has read widely, studied and worked diligently, and reflected creatively. He gradually became very knowledgeable and developed a complete mastery of worldly laws and principles as well as those beyond this world.

He moved to Taiwan in 1949. At first, he worked as the editor of some Buddhist magazines. He founded the Buddha's Names Chanting Association, Buddhist Students Association, Buddhist Youth Association, Buddhist Sunday School for Children, a Buddhist Choir, and the Dharma Preaching Team during the initial stage of his stay at I-lan County in northeastern Taiwan from 1952 to 1956. All these activities constituted the pioneering experiment in the spreading of Buddhism in today's world.

In 1957 he created Buddhist Cultural Service Center, which then became the Buddha's Light Publishing House for publishing a great variety of Buddhist books including those on audio tapes. In 1967 he established the Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Order in Kaohsiung County of southern Taiwan, and made Humanistic Buddhism the core focus of its mission. Grand Master Hsing Yu and his nearly two thousand disciples thus started a world-wide propagation of Humanistic Buddhism through educational, cultural, philanthropic, and Dharma teaching activities. So far the Fo Guan Shan Buddhist Order has built around two hundred

temples and monasteries all over the world. Among them the Hsi Lai Temple, Nan Tien Temple, and Nan Hua Temple have each become the largest temples in North America, Australia, and Africa respectively. In 1991 he established the Buddha's Light International Association which now has developed into 112 associations with more than one million lay members.

The Grand Master has also created several art museums, libraries, publishing companies, bookstores, and mobile hospitals. He has developed nine Buddhist colleges, two high schools, and three universities which include Hsi Lai. In addition to these institutions, several nursery centers, kindergartens, senior citizen homes, and charity foundations have also been founded by him in order to take care of the orphans, retired, and those who are in urgent need of assistance.

He founded the "Fo Guan Shan Tripitaka Editing and Compilation Committee," and serials of Buddhist scriptures have been translated, compiled, rewritten in modern languages, and published. The Fo Guan (Buddha's Light) Buddhist Dictionary has also been edited by a team selected from his disciples. It is available in book form and on CD. They have become very popular. The Buddha's Light Television Station was founded by Grand Master in 1997, but more than thirty years before that, he used radio broadcasting as an effective media for teaching the Dharma to the public.

The Grand Master has authored more than 50 books. Among them are The Biography of Shakyamuni Buddha, the Biographies of Buddha's Ten Greatest Disciples, Hsing Yun's Talks about Ch'an, An Anthology of Grand Master Hsing Yun's Lectures, the Buddha's Light Textbooks (12 Volumes), Buddhism (10 Volumes), and many other books and pamphlets. Almost all of his books are best sellers in Chinese speaking communities. But, it is only recently that some of his most popular books and pamphlets have been translated into English.

As I know from my personal contact with Grand Master over the past twenty years, he is a person who has insightful observation and understanding of everything that comes within his purview. He is very compassionate and can always feel what others feel. He also grasps quickly what others think. He is a perfect author who writes fluently and quickly, by using understandable and beautiful language that attract and touch readers. He is a perfect speaker. He told me that whenever he sits in front of a TV camera, it seems that some sort of switch is turned on in his brain, and he can speak more than ten hours without a break. He speaks without a written draft. All kinds of subjects are already clear in his mind whenever the "switch" is turned on. Each episode of his talks shown on TV has been excellent, never had to repeat any of his statements. The Grand Master has traveled widely and frequently around the world, because his followers in five different continents need his instruction, and the branches all over the world need his direction. He has lectured a lot, written a lot, and worked

more than 16 or 18 hours a day, throughout weekends, holidays and vacations, without breaks. He has always said that he is running a race against time, because there are always so many things ahead for him to do, problems to deal with, tasks to accomplish, and people who need to hear about the Buddha's Dharma in order to relieve themselves from different of bondages in life.

All his beneficial contributions to the welfare of humanity all over the world have been accomplished by him in the past decades with perseverance and motivation in order to realize his belief in Humanistic Buddhism. He is not only a great philosopher and spiritual leader, but also a great practitioner. He is great modern Boddhisattva. Therefore, has the University and the IAB awarded to him the signal honor as IAB Honoree of the Year for 1999.

Naichen Chen
President, Hsi Lai University

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From the Editor

I am pleased that the inaugural issue "Volume 1—2000 of the Hsi Lai Journal of Humanistic Buddhism" could be placed in the hands of scholars within a year of the establishment of the International Academy of Buddhism. I am grateful to Venerable Grand Master Hsing Yun for his spiritual guidance and unfailing support. I am equally indebted to President Naichen Chen, members of the advisory committee and colleagues in the editorial board.

The seven articles, the twelve book reviews, the three announcements and information on recent publications in Buddhist studies constitute the result of the concerted effort of a dedicated group of colleagues. Their unstinting cooperation is acknowledged with gratitude.

The attention of scholars is requested to the query on p 199. If we succeed in tracing who Sankha and Likhita were, we might be able to resolve a long-standing debate among scholars as to what the term *sankhalikhitabrahmacariya* is.

Once the theme for the Second Conference on Humanistic Buddhism is determined, scholars will be invited to make Plenary Session presentations. In the meantime, the editorial board will be pleased to consider articles for publication as well as to receive books for review.

Equally welcome are comments on the articles and reviews published in this issue. It is, however, to be noted that all views expressed in the articles or reviews are those of the authors and do not represent the policy or opinion of the Hsi Lai University or its International Academy of Buddhism or the position of Fo Guang Shan Order.

----- Ananda W. P. Guruge
Editor