

### *Introduction by the President*

This is the third volume of the Hsi Lai Journal of Humanistic Buddhism. It relates to the Third International Conference on Humanistic Buddhism organized by the International Academy of Buddhism (IAB), Hsi Lai University during 16-20 December 2001. Once again I feel honored having the privilege to welcome participation of several distinguished scholars either by contributing articles or attending the conference or both. I am very thankful that during the past three years, the IAB, along with the International Conference as well as the Hsi Lai Journal of Humanistic Buddhism, have grown stronger under your nurture and Master Hsing Yun's inspiring guidance. In addition, my gratitude goes to Dr. Ananda W. P. Guruge, Director of the IAB, his only assistant, a work study student, Mr. Hee Jong You, and many other colleagues, including those of the general service department, for their unfailing efforts.

Humanistic Buddhism is not new, nor does it merely belong to modern age. This becomes clear if we explore the Buddha's teachings more carefully and understand them more deeply. It is the core of Dharma, the truth of life and universe, no matter where and when it was taught by the Buddha. Buddhism is humanistic not only because it pays much attention to human beings, but also because it pays not less attention to other sentient beings and non-sentient beings through a unique demonstration as manifested by the process of birth, suffering, old age, and death of a human being.

Human life is an example used by the Buddha to show how life and existent beings are so impermanent, and how true reality and freedom are so invaluable. Human life is a miniature of the six realms of sentient beings. It also symbolizes a hope that all sentient beings can learn, vow and aspire to become an arahant, a pratyeka-buddha, a bodhisattva, or a Buddha. Therefore, human life is most inspiring and encouraging and is the educational realm for all sentient beings. It also implies an unsurpassed meaning and obligation for each individual to be born as a human being for his/her self-cultivation and offering services to others. Thus we may divide humanistic Buddhism into two-in-one parts: how to educate oneself and how to contribute to educating others. The main purpose of this effort is to build a pure land in this life and in this world. This effort or achievement will also automatically lead to the building of a pure land in a time and place without limit.

Master Venerable Hsing Yun has in his voluminous writings depicted the characteristics of pure land in detail. No one in human history has ever made an interpretation of humanistic Buddhism so vividly to highlight its close association with the rhythm and breath of modern human beings and society. One of the most impressive viewpoints elaborated by him is in regard to universal ethics and localization of Buddhism. The issue of universal ethics is especially important today when dialogue among different beliefs and harmony among diversified ethos systems are so urgent. I appreciate that Dr. Guruge has chosen this issue as the thematic topic for the Third International Conference and this Volume of the Journal. I also thank wholeheartedly all contributors for their insightful articles on this topic from various aspects of their expertise.

It is also my pleasure to congratulate the IAB Honoree for the year 2001. Professor Stanley Weinstein, the Lex Hixon Professor of World Religions of Yale University, is considered one of the world's foremost experts on Chinese and Japanese Buddhism. He is the author of the 1987 book "Buddhism Under the T'ang," which was translated into Chinese in 1999, and has written numerous articles on Buddhism and other East Asian religions. He wrote a chapter on Buddhism for The Cambridge Encyclopedia of China and has written many articles for The Encyclopedia of Japan. He was a contributing editor of the Japanese-English Buddhist Dictionary, published in 1965. His other books include "Awakening from Dreams by Viewing the Mind (Kanjin kakumushō): An Annotated Translation of a Thirteenth-Century Japanese Yogācāra Text" and "When the Gods Met the Buddhas: Religious Syncretism in Early Japan." He is currently at work on an English translation of selected chapters of the "Shobo Genzo" ("Treasury of the Eye of the True Dharma"), a major work of 13th-century Japanese Zen master Dogen.

Weinstein earned a B.A. in Buddhist studies from Komazawa University in Tokyo, an M.A. in Indian philosophy from Tokyo University and a Ph.D. in Far Eastern languages from Harvard University. He taught at Komazawa University and the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies before joining the Yale faculty in 1968 as an associate professor of Buddhist studies. He was promoted to a full professorship in 1974.

Weinstein was one of the first scholars in the USA to hold a full-time teaching position in Buddhist studies. In his early years at Yale, he was credited with single-handedly establishing the University's reputation as a center for advanced study of Buddhism and Japanese religions. He has since trained many graduate students who have gone on to become scholars in the fields of Buddhist studies and East Asian religions. Hsi Lai University has his students Venerable Dr. Yifa in its faculty and Dr. John R. McRae in the Doctoral Program Advisory Committee.

Weinstein was chair of the Council on East Asian studies from 1982 to 1985 and director of graduate studies for the Council on East Asian Studies from 1969 to 1973 and again from 1975 to 1977. He has thrice served as director of graduate studies in the Department of Religious Studies.

In support of his work, Weinstein received a Ford Foundation Foreign Area Fellowship and a National Endowment for the Humanities Senior Fellowship. A frequent traveler to Japan and the Far East, he serves on the editorial board of the Sōtō Zen Text Translation Project in Tokyo. He is a member of the Association of Asian Studies, the American Oriental Society, the International Association of Buddhist Studies, the Society for the Study of Japanese Religion and the Society for the Study of Chinese Religions.

I am grateful to Professor Stanley Weinstein for accepting this honor. Speaking of honors, I wish to express our congratulations to Dr. Ananda W. P. Guruge, the Editor of the Journal, on being honored by CESMEO (International Institute of Advanced Asian Studies, Turin, Italy) with the award of 2001 Prize for Indological Studies, for his work on Asoka: *Asoka the Righteous, A Definitive Biography*, Colombo, 1993.

– Naichen Chen, President, HLU