

# Mahayana, Social Well-being, and the Earth Charter: The Need for Better Group Processes

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## ABSTRACT

*Mahayana Buddhism has changed in many ways, but an enduring core is the ideal of the bodhisattva, and the bodhisattva spirit is what inspires Mahayana work for social well-being. Following the model of Ananda Guruge in his book *Humanistic Buddhism for Social Well-being*,<sup>1</sup> I shall review several scriptural sources along with a case study. By the sixth century in China, the guidelines for bodhisattva practices were outlined in three bodhisattva precept texts – the *Universal Bodhisattva Precepts in the Da fangdeng tuoloni jing*, the *Lay Precepts in the Youposai jie jing*, and the *Brahma-net Precepts in the Fan-wang jing* – but also were expressed in popular social movements such as the *Three Levels Sect (sanjiejiao)* led by the Buddhist master Master Xinxing (540-597) based on an apocryphal text, the *Xiangfa jueyi jing*.<sup>2</sup> After reviewing the major Mahayana sources concerned about social well-being in sixth century China, I conclude by proposing that bodhisattva practice in our contemporary world needs new guidelines for community development, such as the principles outlined in the *Sarvodaya Shramadana movement and the Earth Charter*.*

### Mahayana Bodhisattva Guidelines

Traditional Buddhist ethics were most clearly defined by the vinaya rules designed to ensure the personal purity for monks and nuns, but were supplemented by meditation practices designed to cultivate personal virtue.<sup>3</sup> This twofold ethic was often summarized as "avoid evil and cultivate good." On the other hand, ethical principles designed to develop well-being for secular society have been less prominent in Buddhism, partially because medieval governments had not encouraged or even allowed religious groups to be socially active.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, Mahayana has sought to distinguish itself with a threefold ethic that implies social and ecological responsibility, namely: (1) avoid evil, (2) cultivate good, and (3) save all beings.<sup>5</sup> The work of saving all beings through combining wisdom and compassion became epitomized in Mahayana by the ideal of the bodhisattva. In brief, living as a bodhisattva is the Mahayana approach to social well-being. But what does a bodhisattva do?

There are many images of the bodhisattva as an ideal and savior figure,<sup>6</sup> but our concern is to see how to live as bodhisattva for social well-being. There are many different sets of bodhisattva precepts,<sup>7</sup> but we shall focus on three popular sets in China: the Universal list of twenty-four precepts, the Lay list of six major and twenty-eight minor precepts, and the Brahma-net set of ten major and forty-eight minor precepts. The Universal precepts in the *Da fangdeng tuoloni jing* and the Lay precepts in the *Youposai jie jing* are based on Indian scriptures, but the Brahma-net set of precepts in the *Fan-wang jing* (Jp., *Bommokyō*) may have been compiled in China.<sup>8</sup> Certainly the Brahma-net vows became the most famous and most used in East Asia, and today all monks and nuns in China usually receive these precepts a few weeks after receiving their monastic vows at their ordination. Also, the Lay precepts are still used in modern Taiwan, whereas the Universal Precepts are less well known even though they were foundational to early Tiantai Buddhism, the foundational East Asian

Mahayana school. Accordingly, I include a translation as an Appendix, and will do a comparative analysis of these three bodhisattva precept texts. However, to balance these prescriptive texts, I also include an overview of the Three Levels movement established by Xinxing (540-594) who developed sixteen primary practices and the institution of the Inexhaustible Treasury as an example of how one particular movement applied these Mahayana ideals as a means to achieve social well-being and ultimate salvation.

### **The Universal (*Fangdeng*) Bodhisattva Precepts<sup>9</sup>**

Tiantai Zhiyi (538-597) institutionalized a set of twenty-four bodhisattva precepts as part of the Universal (*fangdeng*) Repentance Ritual<sup>10</sup> that was a regular feature of his daily practice. The twenty-four bodhisattva precepts used in the Fangdeng Repentance Ritual are based on a text translated into Chinese in the early fifth century by Fajong entitled The Great Universal Dharani Scripture (*Da fangdeng tuoloni jing*, Taishô 21.645b22-646b25). This text seems to have "cut across a number of different currents of northern Buddhist thought and practice, which suggests that it was part of a common northern legacy and not the specific provenance of a particular line of teaching,"<sup>11</sup> since it was shared by Pure Land teachers, meditators, the Three Levels sect, and Tiantai in medieval China.

Unlike the Brahma-net precepts, the twenty-four Universal precepts do not repeat the *pancasila*, the five basic precepts against killing, stealing, lying, sexual misconduct, and intoxication. The Fangdeng vows assume knowledge of these five basic Buddhist precepts, but affirm that bodhisattvas are also responsible for helping others keep these rules. For example, Rule #9 says that if others are breaking the precepts, then the bodhisattva has a duty to remind them that they are violating the precepts and should stop. Similarly, Rule #8 says that a bodhisattva who learns that others are committing a major wrong should try to help that person at least three times. More specifically, Rule #7 says that if an angry person is going to burn the sangha's residence, the bodhisattva must strongly admonish that person against doing so. Thus, the Fangdeng vows assume that the bodhisattva is keeping the basic monastic precepts, and instead emphasize the responsibility of bodhisattvas for correcting the behavior of others. This is a socially active role that tells us to be "our brother's keeper."

Although there are a number of isolated precepts that deal with specific issues -- such as not keeping money that is found by accident (Rule #5), avoiding places where you might get into trouble (Rule #20), not boasting of spiritual visions (Rule #24), and vegetarianism (Rules #21 and 22) -- the Fangdeng precepts are particularly concerned with how bodhisattvas respond to the wrongs of others. For example, the text not only is against eating meat, but also is against condoning others who do eat meat, such as by telling others that there is no harm in eating meat, or in continuing to honor people who eat meat.

While a bodhisattva is to become actively involved in correcting some wrongs, and not to condone others, there are some situations where bodhisattvas are told not to make things worse by broadcasting private misconduct to others. For example, the rule against sexual misconduct is assumed, and the Fangdeng precepts emphasize that a bodhisattva should avoid excessive indulgence (Rule #2), but the ethical principle added by the Fangdeng precepts is to say that a bodhisattva should not speak ill of a monk who keeps a wife (Rule #3), nor should a bodhisattva report a wife's misconduct to her husband (Rule #12). That is to say, sexual misconduct is wrong, but it is also wrong to increase social pain and divisions by gossiping and inciting retribution. As a

consequence, a bodhisattva must go beyond legalism and instead must evaluate corrective action in terms of its overall consequences for helping or harming.

"Words can kill," is a popular saying, and Rules #4 and #6 continue the theme of #2 and #3 by condemning speaking to others with words that encourage suicide or killing others. Equally forbidden are words that discourage people from treating their enemies with kindness (Rule #14) or that discourage the charitable work of someone else (Rule #10). Although bodhisattvas should tell people not to do wrong, Rule #16 says that words of criticism are harmful and wrong when they are based only on our own emotions, and Rule #16 says that we should not criticize others so as to ruin someone's reputation. Accordingly, we cannot interpret the precepts legalistically and praise or blame others mechanically, but bodhisattvas must discern the motives for their words, and speak words in a way that will encourage life, kindness, charitable work, and harmonious social relations.

The major thrust of the Fangdeng precepts is not to be an enemy to others, but to be a helpful friend even to your enemies. This strong social message is found at the beginning of the precepts and is echoed throughout: bodhisattvas should help hungry people who come for food, drink, and clothing (Rule #1); bodhisattvas should praise those who are doing good deeds (Rule #17); and should help those who are building stupas or hermitages alone (Rule #18); bodhisattvas should not physically fight others (Rule #15), bodhisattvas should not consider their enemies as enemies (Rule #13); bodhisattvas should encourage people to have good spiritual friends (*kalyanamitra*) and to avoid bad friends (Rule #19); and bodhisattvas should not use threats of a bad future rebirth to get people to speak, but should understand skillful methods (Rule #23).

These positive guides for social actions are far from being a vision of a good society. Nevertheless, the Fangdeng precepts at least move the bodhisattva beyond a concern for the inner, personal purity and legalism that was encouraged by the monastic vinaya, and instead they evaluated deeds in terms of their harm or benefit to others. In particular, they emphasized the power of words to help or to destroy, they insisted on welfare for the poor, and they required that the bodhisattva take responsibility for correcting the behavior of others.

### ***Brahma-net Bodhisattva Precepts***<sup>12</sup>

Whereas the Universal Precepts assumed the *pancasila* and supplemented them with the bodhisattva path, the Brahma-net Precepts begin with the *pancasila* as the first half of the ten major precepts, which are then supplemented by an additional forty-eight other minor precepts. Thus, the text can be seen as a more complete collection of guidelines that could function either as a self-sufficient lists of precepts (as in the case of Tendai in Japan<sup>13</sup>) or as supplemental to the monastic vinaya (as in the case of Chinese Buddhists), rather than serving only in a supplemental role like the Universal Precepts.

More than half of the fifty-eight precepts in the Brahma-net Precepts deal with the relations of the individual to the sangha or to the Buddhist tradition, such as urging against slandering the Three Jewels, slandering or gossiping about the failings of other Buddhists, proper methods of teaching the Dharma, avoidance of contaminating activities such as watching ball games or gambling, honoring the Sutras and Precepts, maintaining the proper seating arrangement in the assembly of monks or nuns, procedures for receiving the bodhisattva precepts, teaching repentance to

violators of these precepts, not exploiting the Dharma by teaching it for gain, not provoking quarrels in the sangha, etc.

In addition to the precepts devoted to maintaining the dharma and the sangha, approximately twenty-four precepts in the Brahma-net Precepts move beyond the Buddhist community to deal explicitly with actions in society, namely:

Major Precepts:

- I. don't kill
- II. don't steal
- III. no sexual misconduct
- IV. no false speech
- V. no intoxicants
- VII. don't praise self and disparage others, but be willing to undergo slander and insult for others
- VIII. don't be stingy, nor be insulting to the needy
- IX. accept the repentance of others and avoid hatefulness

Minor Precepts:

2. don't consume intoxicants or deal in intoxicants
3. don't eat meat
4. don't eat the five pungent plants
9. care for the sick as the foremost field of blessing
10. don't collect deadly weapons, nor seek revenge
11. don't act as a military envoy
12. don't conduct uncompassionate business dealings (for example, slavery, being an undertaker, keeping domestic animals)
13. don't deliberately slander others
14. don't ignite destructive fires
- 16b help the needy, even if you have to give your own body, and then teach them the Dharma
17. don't curry favor with the powerful for the sake of selfish manipulation and to gain advantage over others
20. seek to liberate all beings (physically and spiritually) based on your kinship with all beings
21. don't seek revenge and kill others
29. don't conduct deviant livelihoods
30. don't conduct other deviant livelihoods but choose purer activities
32. don't harm living beings
45. have compassion for all beings and help them become enlightened

The social ethics of the Brahma-net Precepts begin with the standard set of five precepts common to all Buddhists, namely, no killing, stealing, lying, sexual misconduct, or taking intoxicants. The first four are the earliest, and are common to all world religions. The positive contribution of the Brahma-net Precepts is to go beyond the negative prohibition against wrong action, by emphasizing constructive action. For example the prohibition against killing in the monastic tradition is explained in the Brahma-net Precepts as developing inner attitudes of kindness, compassion, and filial respect. Furthermore, a bodhisattva "should devise skillful methods to rescue and protect all beings." This takes an essentially negative precept and changes it into a directive for saving the world! Thus, what begins as a rule to maintain personal purity

is transformed into a rule for social responsibility and positive action for the well-being of others.

Similarly, the prohibition against stealing adds the positive goal of developing inner attitudes of kindness and family affection, as well as to "aid people to produce blessings and happiness." In the case of sexual misconduct, the bodhisattva precepts also urge people to "rescue all beings and instruct them in the the dharmas of purity." In the precept against lying, the bodhisattva not only should use proper speech, but also maintain "proper views and lead all other beings to maintain them as well." Thus, the rule is not just against misleading others, but for positively correcting others and spreading the truth.

Usually in the monastic precepts, the goal is to ensure the inner harmony of the sangha and the well-being of the individual rather than the enhancement and protection of society. For example, in discussing the fifth precept against taking intoxicants, the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya (*Ssu-fen lü*) that is used in East Asia offers the following ten reasons not to take intoxicants:

1. one's facial complexion becomes unattractive;
2. physical strength and balance is lost;
3. one can't see straight;
4. one's behavior gives the appearance of anger;
5. it is a waste of resources to use grain for alcohol rather than food;
6. illness increases;
7. one's temper is lost more easily and gets involved in fights;
8. a good reputation is lost;
9. one loses the ability to think clearly and so acts stupidly;
10. at the end of life, one will receive a lower rebirth in hell, as a hungry ghost, or as an animal.<sup>14</sup>

Although there is a warning against influencing others to develop distorted thinking by dealing in intoxicants, the weight of these monastic warnings is on protecting one's individual life, or the well-being of the monastic community. In contrast, the bodhisattva precepts dealing with intoxicants (the fifth major precept and the second minor precept, #V and #2 in our list above) show primary concern for the welfare of others. Specifically, the major precept is not against a person drinking, but against dealing in alcohol so as to injure others. Only in the minor precepts is there the injunction against consuming intoxicants oneself.

Like the Universal Precepts, the sixth major precept states that publicly talking about the misconduct of other Buddhists is so serious that the bodhisattva no longer can be a member of the Buddhist community. This is an internal rule aimed at removing communal dissension that comes from gossip, but does not prohibit reporting civil crimes that injure society. However, the seventh major precept goes beyond the sangha to advocate a rule for all society, namely, not to flaunt one's own virtues and hide the good of others. This is so serious that the Brahma-net Precepts also requires dismissal for this action, and is supported by a minor precept prohibiting slander (#13 above). This rule seems particularly relevant as a guide for contemporary Buddhist politicians who are thinking about principles for campaign reform.

Two other precepts that affect society and require dismissal if they are violated are the eighth major precept against stinginess and the ninth major precept against anger and fighting:

[Major Precept #VIII] A disciple of the Buddha must not act in a stingy manner, encourage others to do so, or involve himself/herself in the causes, conditions, methods, or karma of stinginess. When a bodhisattva encounters any poor or destitute person who has come to beg, s/he should give that person anything s/he needs. Hence, if a bodhisattva directs evil or hateful thoughts at such a person or refuses to give him/her even a penny, a needle, or a blade of grass, or to speak even a sentence, a verse, or a speck of dharma to whoever seeks dharma, and if s/he further scolds and humiliates such a person, s/he thereby commits a bodhisattva offense requiring exclusion from the sangha (*parajika*).<sup>15</sup>

[Major Precept #IX] A disciple of the Buddhist must not become hateful, encourage others to do so, or involve himself/herself in the causes, conditions, methods, or karma of hatefulness. S/he should always maintain a mind of kindness, compassion, and filial compliance. If instead a bodhisattva abuses sentient or insentient beings with harsh speech by going so far as to attack them with his fists, knife, or club, by continuing to maintain relentless hatred, or by refusing to set aside his grudge even when the object of enmity confesses with sincere words, repents, and seeks forgiveness, s/he thereby commits a bodhisattva offense requiring exclusion from the sangha (*parajika*).<sup>16</sup>

These offenses that require dismissal from the Buddhist community largely focus on personal control and compliance, but do not advocate taking responsibility for society. Even though they have social implications in being nonviolent and responsive to the needs of those who ask for help, there is no obligation to reform society. Furthermore, a handful of other minor precepts also support nonviolence (see #10, #11, #12, #21 and #32 above) but are not directed toward socially active reform.

Directives for actively improving society are found in a minority of the Brahma-net Precepts, but a very important one is the ninth minor precept:

[Minor Precept #9] When a disciple of the Buddha meets anyone who is sick, s/he should constantly make offerings to that person just as s/he would to a Buddha. Whether the person is one's parents, one's teacher, a member of the sangha, or a disciple, is one with impaired faculties, or is afflicted with any of the manifold illnesses, one should make offerings and care for that person until s/he recovers. Of the eight fields of blessings, looking after the sick is the foremost. Hence, if a bodhisattva fails to look after the sick, or if s/he directs hateful thoughts toward that person and therefore refuses to rescue the individual, whether s/he is in a dwelling of the sangha, the city, the wilds, the mountain forests, or along the road, s/he thereby violates this minor precept and commits a defiling offense.<sup>17</sup>

The emphasis on looking after the sick offers a powerful message to nations such as the United States that allow 42 million citizens to be without health insurance, and offers strong incentive to support international relief organizations such as the International Red Cross and Doctors Without Borders, as well as to provide minimum labor safety for the workers of the world.

A portion of the sixteenth minor precept (#16b above) requires that practitioners make offerings to Buddhist leaders even by burning their finger, arm, or body if need be. Then the text adds that they should "forsake one's entire body, one's

flesh, hands and feet as an offering to starving tigers, wolves, lions, and hungry ghosts."<sup>18</sup> This directive echoes the famous example of the jataka story of the Buddha giving his body to the hungry tigress<sup>19</sup> and is so extreme that only a few have dared to take it literally. However, in this day of organ transplants, the Confucian precept to preserve the body (Chapter One of the *Filial Piety Scripture*) seems to dominate East Asian Buddhists since so few are willing to support organ donations. A contemporary model for implementing this value is provided in Hawaii where a persons applying for a driver's license are asked if they would be willing to donate their organs if they die in a traffic accident, and their approval is marked on their driver's license.

Also practical is the twentieth minor precept that supports kindness to animals:

[Minor Precept #20] A disciple of the Buddha must maintain a mind of kindness and cultivate the practice of liberating beings. S/he should reflect thus: "All male beings have been my father and all females have been my mother. There is not a single being who has not given birth to me during my previous lives, hence all beings of the six levels of rebirth are my parents. Therefore, when a person kills and eats any of these beings, s/he thereby slaughters his/her parents. Furthermore, he kills a body that has once been his/her own, since all elemental earth and water have previously served as part of his/her body and all elemental fire and air have served as his/her basic substance. Therefore, he/she should always cultivate the practice of liberating beings and in every life be reborn in the eternally-abiding dharma, and teach others to liberate beings as well."

Whenever a bodhisattva sees a person preparing to kill and animal, s/he should devise a skillful method to rescue and protect it, freeing it from its suffering and difficulties. Furthermore, s/he should use the bodhisattva precepts and explain them in order to teach and transform beings and to rescue and deliver those beings. On the day that one's father, mother, or brother dies, one should request a dharma master to lecture on the bodhisattva precepts, sutras, and moral codes to generate blessings for the deceased and lead him/her to see the Buddhas and secure rebirth among humans and gods. Hence, if a bodhisattva fails to act accordingly, s/he thereby violates the minor precept and commits a defiling offense.<sup>20</sup>

Two very important points are included in this precept: (1) bodhisattvas should actively seek skillful ways to save animals, as well as ways to teach the dharma to other people, and (2) the reason they should do this is that all beings are their relatives. Earlier in the text there is the injunction not to kill but to save all beings (#1), not to be stingy (#VIII), to care for the sick as the foremost field of blessing (#9), and to help the needy, even if one must give one's own body (#16b), but this is the first time that the motive goes beyond avoiding a bad future rebirth, but saying that bodhisattvas should help others because they are closely related to them, they are close family kin to the bodhisattvas, who therefore treat them kindly.

In English, the word "kindness" is not based on an emotional state or feeling of kindness, but on the word "kin" that means to have "kinship" with another. One should help others not based on an emotion of sympathy that can come or go, but on the insight and blunt recognition that others are not separate or different from oneself, but are closely related. To help others is to help oneself. This provides a kinship basis for the golden rule "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

### **Lay Bodhisattva Precepts of the *Upasaka Scripture*<sup>21</sup>**

The six major and twenty-eight minor precepts for laity in the *Upasaka Scripture* constantly repeat the refrain that it is more difficult for laity to practice precepts than monastics because conditions are more unfavorable. Further, this text is unusual in praising lay practice as more effective than monastic practice since monastics can only give the dharma, whereas laity can be helpful in physical ways, such as offering food, and medicine, and shelter. As a result, this precept text is very close to the priorities of contemporary Korean Chontae School that is committed to Buddhism for society, in everyday life, and for everyone.

The precepts that are given do not emphasize ethics for society, except for the last minor precept that requires care for the sick, not only within one's family or the sangha, but indiscriminately and for strangers: "If a layperson who has taken the precepts encounters a sick person along the road and does not stay to care for and make convenient arrangements for the person but abandons him/her, then this layperson commits a misdeed that cannot be recovered nor purified."<sup>22</sup> As a result, medical service to society is very highly valued. Since these precepts are regularly received today by laity in Taiwan, it is perhaps a natural consequence that the largest charity in Taiwan is the Buddhist Tzu-chi Foundation that involves millions of volunteers who offer health and welfare services in twenty countries, and who operate a medical school, nursing school, and modern hospital.<sup>23</sup>

Social service is so highly regarded in the *Upasaka Scripture* that the text emphasizes compassion not just to benefit self and others, but as the best way to attain enlightenment. The Brahma-net Precepts requires that bodhisattvas try to convert all beings, both human and non-human, by speaking encouraging words to them (minor precept #45). However, the lay precepts go further to suggest that a bodhisattva not only has compassion for all beings and seeks to save them, but "is one who can always awaken the minds of sentient beings" through skillful methods that involves (1) inner compassion and (2) the practical action of "saving sentient beings from immeasurable suffering and afflictions."<sup>24</sup> The importance of skillful methods and effective action represents a development beyond cultivation of inner attitudes and is expressed by an emphasis on various forms of social welfare – including such practical ventures as learning medicine, building hospitals, repairing roads, building guest houses, digging wells, planting fruit trees, building bridges, maintaining canals, protecting animals, massaging tired travelers, making shade with umbrellas, providing people with ear picks, and consoling the grieving.<sup>25</sup> In many other Buddhist texts, all that is required is the cultivation of compassionate attitudes. In the *Upasaka Scripture*, one must be both inwardly compassionate and outwardly effective.

Also, the priorities have changed in the lay precepts. The *Upasaka Scripture* says that there are two areas of giving: one is to the field of blessings (the Buddhist sangha) that is supported to increase the conditions for happiness, and the other is the field of poverty that is supported to eliminate the causes of suffering.<sup>26</sup> If a bodhisattva has little wealth, s/he should give first to the poor, and second to the sangha. Furthermore, the benefits of giving to animals out of compassion are equal to making offerings to the Buddha.<sup>27</sup> These statements seem like a dramatic reversal of conventional Buddhist priorities. However, emphasis on selfless and heroic action on behalf of animals has always existed as a part of the Jataka tradition of tales about the Buddha's previous rebirths. In this vein, the ninth chapter of the *Upasaka Scripture* recalls the Buddha's rebirth as a fish, a beast, or a medicine tree when he sacrificed



himself for others. This change of priorities from serving the sangha to saving the world is completed when the text announces that doing such compassionate actions is the goal of Buddhism since "The path of enlightenment is enlightenment, and enlightenment is the path."<sup>28</sup> This statement elevates the path of compassionate service to the level of enlightenment as the goal of practice.

Finally, a recurring emphasis in the Upasaka Scripture is the necessity of treating enemies as members of our family: "if a person can see even one hair's breadth of goodness in one's foes rather than their unwholesomeness, you should know that he is practicing kindness. When his foes are suffering from illness and if he goes visiting, takes care of them, and gives them what they need, you should know that he is cultivating compassion."<sup>29</sup> The theme of treating enemies as one's own family members is a recurring theme among modern Buddhist leaders such as the Dalai Lama, Thich Nhat Hanh, and Maha Ghosananda, whose countries have experienced brutal invasion and civil war with millions of casualties.<sup>30</sup>

### **Inexhaustible Storehouse as Buddhist Social Welfare**

The values presented in the three lists of bodhisattva ethics are ideals, and the question must be asked whether they were ever implemented, especially those precepts that urge sacrificing oneself for others and never denying anyone in need. One of the most startling examples of bodhisattva actions is the Inexhaustible Storehouse that was established by the Three Levels movement of Xinxing (540-594) that seems to have embodied the spirit of these three bodhisattva guidelines.

In 589 ce, China was reunified by the Sui Dynasty for the first time in over 350 years. In 583, one of the most powerful members of the Sui elite, Gao Jiong,<sup>31</sup> Vice Minister of State Affairs and finance minister of the Sui, abandoned his house in the capital and petitioned to have it established as a temple, and at the same time he established a sub temple for Xinxing (540-594). At this sub temple, the Huadu monastery, Xinxing instituted the Inexhaustible Storehouse that received donations for Buddhist devotees that was then distributed to anyone who was in need. No records were kept of the money loaned, and the money was to be repaid whenever the borrowers were able. While this Inexhaustible Storehouse was classified by some scholars as a lending institution, Jamie Hubbard argues that because it charged no interest and did not require records to be kept, it should be seen as expressing "the Mahayana ideal of bodhisattva's inexhaustible storehouse of compassion manifested in the context of Chinese social welfare practices."<sup>32</sup>

Who would provide funds for such a poorly managed economic enterprise? Based on the Buddhist worldview and values, all kinds of people donated, often anonymously. Giving (*dana*) was the first virtue in the Six Perfections and was especially praised as a bodhisattva deed and also as a way to gain merit for a better rebirth and ultimate salvation. However, in sixth century China, the nature of giving was seriously redefined based on the bodhisattva ideal. In an apocryphal scripture frequently quoted by Xinxing, the *Xiangfa jueyi jing* (dated about 520 ce), we read that the Buddha distinguished elevated the "field of compassion" above the "field of reverence" in order to redistribute donations away from the temples and monastic indulgence in order to give more to the poor and needy:

In various sutras I have stressed the perfection of charity, for I wish that my disciples, both monks and laymen, would cultivate the compassionate heart, and give to the poor, the needy, the orphaned, and the aged, even to a famished dog. However, my disciples did not

understand my idea, and only offered gifts to the *ching-t'ien* [field of respect] and not to the *pei-t'ien* [field of compassion]. When I speak of the field of respect, I refer to the Three Jewels, the Buddha, the dharma, and the sangha. When I speak of the field of compassion, I refer to the poor and the needy, the orphaned, the aged, and even the ant. Of these two categories, the field of compassion is the superior one.<sup>33</sup>

It was in this spirit of emphasizing practical efforts to increase social well-being that Buddhist hospitals were started in South China in the sixth century by the kings and princes of Ch'i and Liang, and in North China by the Three Levels movement. These new values were expressed by Xinxing in the guidelines for practice in his community in a list called the "Sixteen Inexhaustible Practices." These were:

1. Inexhaustible offering to the Buddha; this consists of worship of the Buddha, etc.;
2. Inexhaustible offering to the dharma; this consists of reciting sutras, etc.;
3. Inexhaustible offering to the sangha; this consists of universally offering [to the sangha] without question of whether they maintain the precepts or break the precepts;
4. Inexhaustible offering to sentient beings; this consists of universally offering to all sentient beings of the six paths without question of whether they practice or do not practice; the six paths are (a) heavenly beings; (b) humans; (c) fighting demons; (d) hell beings; (e) animals; (f) hungry ghosts;
5. Inexhaustible separation from all evil;
6. Inexhaustible cultivation of all virtue;
7. Inexhaustible giving of incense;
8. Inexhaustible giving of light (candles);
9. Inexhaustible giving of bathing materials;
10. Inexhaustible giving of sound (bells);
11. Inexhaustible giving of clothing;
12. Inexhaustible giving of shelter;
13. Inexhaustible giving of bedding;
14. Inexhaustible giving of eating utensils;
15. Inexhaustible giving of charcoal and fire;
16. Inexhaustible giving of food and drink.<sup>34</sup>

As this list shows, a heavy emphasis is placed on giving to all those in need. So the first conclusion we can make is that the Mahayana bodhisattva approach to social well-being took their ideals seriously and implemented social welfare in a very practical way. Second, they were offered to all people and living beings regardless of rank and status. However, the sad news is that in China religions were restricted by heavy political control, and were gradually eliminated.

Whalen Lai observes that Buddhist social activism in China was similar to medieval Christian charities,<sup>35</sup> and both were seen as innovations since "the burial of the dead was the sole duty of the families; and the feeding and clothing of the poor was the sole obligation of the state." As a consequence, Christian charities were banned by Roman authorities, and in 717 C.E. Emperor Xuanzong was advised that based on the teachings of Confucius, Buddhists should not be operating charities at their temples.

The hospital wards and system of charities developed by Buddhists in the sixth century were encouraged and adopted by Empress Wu, but were taken over completely by the state during the persecution of Buddhism in 845. The imperial decree read:

As for the fields of compassion and the hospitals, these have no one to manage them since the monks returned to lay life. I am afraid that the infirm and the sick would have no one to look after them. Let the two capitals estimate and make available monastery land...Each field would be administered by a venerable old man chosen for the purpose. The harvest from the land would be used to supply the food needed.<sup>36</sup>

After a brief revival of Buddhism, the Sung dynasty (960-1279) also restricted ordinations which emptied the temples of monks and caused them to be available for state confiscation as schools in 1151. Although the religious laity began to form mutual aid associations to fill the gap left by the decline of the temples, these associations (such as the White Lotus and White Cloud groups) were seen by the state as a threat to their power, and were banned. Thus, the Buddhist charities of the Sui and T'ang dynasties ended in state persecution that forbade social activism.

In 1666 mutual aid societies were banned again by the Qing government for fear that they would form a nucleus for popular rebellion. Although some charities reappeared under the sponsorship of the Sacred Edict of 1724, these were secular and not Buddhist. As a consequence, when Dharmapala visited China after the World Parliament of Religions in 1893, the monks of Lung-hua Temple in Nanking were so afraid of being arrested by the government for forming "illegal associations" that they asked him not to set up a branch of the Mahabodhi Society.<sup>37</sup>

#### **Contemporary Mahayana, Project Dana, and the Earth Charter**

Sadly the Buddhist social welfare experiments in sixth century China were seen in later times as competing with political power and were usually outlawed. The good news is that in the past fifty years there has been increasing religious freedom and institutional diversity to implement the bodhisattva ideals of universality and compassion. The bodhisattva spirit of humanistic Buddhism championed early in the twentieth century by the reformist monk Taixu (d. 1948) has finally been implemented by a new generation, especially by the nun, Master Zhengyan, who founded the Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Association in 1966, and by the monk, Master Xingyun, who established the Buddhist Light Fo Guang Shan movement in 1967.<sup>38</sup> These two movements have developed into the largest Mahayana networks of social services worldwide.

To date, Tzu Chi and Fo Guang Shan are largely restricted to the Chinese community even though their activities span the globe. Other Mahayana movements for social well-being have also risen in other cultures, not only in Korea and Japan, but also in the West, such as the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order founded in 1967 and the Zen Peacemaker Order founded in 1980. Although these are well known,<sup>39</sup> there are other examples, such as prison ministries and hospice care. In particular, the Mahayana bodhisattva spirit of "selfless giving" (*dana*) has been recovered by a group called Project Dana that serves those who are frail and home-bound. And unlike many other Mahayana groups, Project Dana has remarkable ethnic diversity.

Another innovation of Project Dana is that instead of offering money and goods, its 700 volunteers give their time and compassion by visiting and serving 800

frail, elderly and handicapped people. Begun in Hawaii at the Moiliili Hongwanji Mission<sup>40</sup> by Rose Nakamura and Shim Kanazawa, Project Dana is the only Buddhist organization among the 750 groups in the National Association of Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers. By crossing ethnic boundaries, Project Dana has received national recognition. In 1993 its project administrator, Rose Nakamura, received the first Rosalyn Carter Caregivers Award, and in 2001 it was one of the thirteen community-based organizations in North America to receive a SHARE Award from GlaxoSmithKline and the University of Pennsylvania Institute on Aging.

Project Dana began in 1989 in response to a Christian initiative (called Project Respect) that began in 1984 but then faltered. While Project Dana consists largely of Buddhist temples, by 2003 there were several Christian churches who had become members. In a similar interfaith spirit, already established interfaith hospital and prison chaplaincy groups have welcomed Buddhist participation as part of their teams. This institutional pluralism raises the question of the reform of Mahayana ethical statements to reflect the new social environment.

Perhaps the most famous effort to modernize Mahayana ethics was expressed in the fourteen precepts of the Order of Inter-Being led by Thich Nhat Hanh.<sup>41</sup> However, even this collection developed under the guidance of a Buddhist peace activist, continues to focus on inner attitudes more than social balance. Some Buddhists have found the UN Declaration of Human Rights to be an important new ethical guidelines, while others have recently begun promoting the latest UN initiative, the Earth Charter.<sup>42</sup> After the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro (the Rio Earth Summit) led by Maurice Strong, work began on composing an Earth Charter that became the most inclusive process of any major international document. Among Mahayana participants, the most active was the Soka Gakkai International (SGI) who conducted workshops not only in local districts, but also through their Boston Research Center for the 21st Century (BRC). In addition to convening workshops with Steven Rockefeller and Mary Evelyn Tucker, two of the Earth Charter leaders, the BRC published a book offering Buddhist feedback.<sup>43</sup> In addition, SGI also produced an award-winning video, *The Quiet Revolution*, that features ecological projects by grassroots organizers on several continents.

The Earth Charter emphasizes positive inner values and attitudes, but it adds important new guidelines for community development, balance, and justice, as well as a concern for ecological well-being. Among its four main sections, the Earth Charter's emphasis on community is found immediately in the title of Part One: "Respect and Care for the Community of Life." This section begins by affirming the Buddhist principle of the value and interdependency of every form of life and balances the enjoyment of nature with responsibility for protecting it. Whereas Buddhist precepts emphasize personal responsibilities, the Declaration of Human Rights stress the responsibilities of governments to protect and nourish individuals. By contrast, a recent revision of the Declaration of Human Rights in the light of the world religions strikes a balance by balancing rights and responsibilities,<sup>44</sup> and the Earth Charter continues this approach.

Even more important, unlike earlier Buddhist ethics the Earth Charter is addressed both to individuals and to communities. Buddhist ethics always address the individual, but never offer guidance to Buddhist institutions and communities. However, the Earth Charter (Principle #3a) urges that "communities at all levels guarantee human rights and fundamental freedoms and provide everyone an

opportunity to realize his or her full potential." In addition, the Earth Charter calls for communities to promote "social and economic justice, enabling all to achieve a secure and meaningful livelihood that is ecologically responsible." (Principle #3b) Indeed, Part Three of the Earth Charter is totally devoted to "Social and Economic Justice" and eradicating poverty as "an ethical, social, and environmental imperative." (Principle #9)

What is distinctive about the Earth Charter is that the goal of eradicating poverty, as well as protecting the environment, is not just an individual responsibility, or a government goal, but a process. This process requires that "economic activities and institutions," traditionally controlled by an elite, should "at all levels promote human development in an equitable and sustainable manner." (Principle #10) In particular, this requires "gender equality and equity as prerequisites to sustainable development." (Principle #11) While sexual abuse and misconduct is condemned in Buddhist precepts, the strong affirmation of gender equality and equity is still lacking as part of normative Mahayana.<sup>45</sup> In addition, it is also necessary to "ensure universal access to education, health care, and economic opportunity." (Principle #11) While bodhisattvas have emphasized medical service, there has been less attention given to education and economic opportunity. Fortunately, the World Bank is starting to emphasize the education of girls as a necessary step in eradicating poverty, and universal primary education has been articulated as one of the Millennium Development Goals to be met by 2015. However, many mainstream Mahayana groups are still clothed in Asian cultural patterns and have not yet adopted these values of inclusiveness and equity, or the "equitable distribution of wealth" (Principle #10).

Other goals in the Earth Charter that Buddhists need to embody more fully are the strengthening of "democratic institutions at all levels," "transparency and accountability in governance, inclusive participation in decision making, and access to justice." (Principle #13) While Buddhists generally have advocated treating "all living beings with respect and consideration" (Principle #15) and have promoted "a culture of tolerance, nonviolence, and peace," (Principle #16), they have been less active in providing "the knowledge, values, and skills needed for a sustainable way of life," (Principle #14) which require community and institutional organization and decision.

In sum, Mahayana ethics is like all traditional religious ethics in emphasizing individual morality, but has yet to clearly develop principles to guide its communities and institutions. As a result, the Earth Charter offers important examples of processes for fulfilling bodhisattva ideals in community life at all levels. Helping others requires not just individual dedication, but also social organization in government, business, and society. When the new bodhisattva realizes this and seeks to connect inner transformation with collective action, there is perhaps no better instrument than the sixteen guiding principles found in the Earth Charter. Only when Mahayana compassion and wisdom are combined with these clear organizational steps will it be possible to dream of completely actualizing the bodhisattva vow to "save all beings."

### **Final Reflections**

The sixth century in China was a period in which Mahayana bodhisattva ideals had been fully transmitted from India and were being actively appropriated and developed by Chinese leaders as an alternative to the traditional Chinese society, especially as seen in the Universal precepts in the *Da fangdeng tuoloni jing*, the Lay precepts in the *Youposai jie jing*, and the Brahma-net precepts in the *Fan-wang jing*. In addition, it was a time of political experimentation and transition that gave several

opportunities for Buddhists to implement bodhisattva ideals of compassion toward the poor, the sick, the elderly, and the orphaned in society, and even to provide economic support as seen most notably in the Inexhaustible Storehouse of the Three Levels sect.

The modern world represents a new chapter in the practice of Mahayana social ethics and many new leaders are emerging to try to implement these ideals. However, it seems clear that Mahayana leaders need to develop new awareness of the importance of group processes, not just morality for individuals, if they are to fulfill its promise of inclusiveness and compassion for all. Some examples are beginning to appear in Mahayana, such as the Tzu-chi, Fo Guang Shan, and Project Dana. However, the most outstanding example of a Buddhist group that has pioneered community development principles for social well-being is the Sarvodaya Shramadana movement in Sri Lanka.<sup>46</sup> "Sarvodaya" means the well-being of everyone, an ideal that is not owned by Mahayana any longer but is a common value for reformers across cultures. "Shramadana" is a new form of *dana* because like Project Dana it goes beyond giving possessions and instead means to share one's energy, time, and labor. In the Sarvodaya case, shramadana is a name for their work camp where people not only help others, but learn how to practice the principles of equality, transparency, accountability, and consensus.

In sum, if Mahayana Buddhists take seriously their threefold ethic of avoiding evil, cultivating good, and saving all beings, then we need to consider supplementing our emphasis on cultivating inner wisdom and compassion by embodying new social principles in our ethics. For models, we can learn from modern Mahayana movements, but we can also go beyond our own groups by turning to the principles taught in the Sarvodaya Shramadana movement and the Earth Charter. In this way we can be even more inclusive when we experiment with incorporating principles of group process into our Mahayana rituals, vows, meditation, and institutions.

#### APPENDIX

Although the bodhisattva precepts found in the *Fan-wang jing* and *You posai jie jing* have been translated into Western languages, there is no translation of the Universal (*fangdeng*) precepts. Accordingly, below is a draft translation<sup>47</sup> based on the Taishô tripitaka text.

##### ***Twenty-four Major Precepts for a Bodhisattva***

from the *Fangdeng tuolo jing* (T 21.645c9 - 646b4)

1. If a bodhisattva doesn't comply with the wishes of hungry people who come to his/her place for food, drink and linen, then this is called violating the first major precept.
2. If a bodhisattva excessively indulges in sexual desire, not precluding animals (as a partner), then this is called violating the second major precept.
3. If a bodhisattva based on his/her own inclinations speaks ill of a *bhiksu* who [wrongly] keeps a wife, then this is called violating the third major precept.
4. If a bodhisattva sees someone who is melancholy and contemplating committing suicide, and based on her/his own opinions increases that person's anger and destroys that person's will to live, then this is just like burning down everything with fire,<sup>48</sup> and is called violating the fourth major precept.
5. If a bodhisattva leaves the hermitage and going to a deserted road finds money or a precious object and keeps it following his/her own inclinations, then this is called violating the fifth major precept.

6. When seeing someone who out of anger is going to take other person's life, if a bodhisattva praises that person's anger with pleasing comments, then this is called violating the sixth major precept.
7. When seeing someone in an angry rage, and hearing that out of anger that person is going to burn the sangha's residence, if a bodhisattva doesn't whole-heartedly admonish that bad person, this is called violating the seventh major precept.
8. When seeing or hearing of someone who is committing a major sin, a bodhisattva in this case should secretly call that person to come to his place, [saying that] "I have good medicine so that your capacity to keep the precepts can revive and come back to life." If that person won't come, the bodhisattva should call him three times. If there is less than three [attempts to help the person], this is called violating the eighth major precept.
9. When seeing or hearing of someone violating [any of] the five deadly sins, a bodhisattva should go to see him/her, saying that "this is not the righteous dharma," and "you are not performing pure acts, so don't do that." Failing to take this action is called violating the ninth major precept.
10. When seeing or hearing of someone else's plan to establish great charitable work, if a bodhisattva becomes angry and destroys that person's understanding of good deeds, this is called violating the tenth major precept.
11. When seeing someone else indulging in food and wine, if a bodhisattva just based on his/her own emotions scolds that person and regardless of the causes and circumstances [says that] it is an impure deed, then this is called a violation of the eleventh major precept.
12. If a bodhisattva sees or hears of someone seducing someone else's wife and goes to that woman's correct husband and reports what has happened saying that someone is offending him and that he can go and see, this is called violating the twelfth major precept.
13. If a bodhisattva considers his/her enemy as an enemy, this is called violating the thirteenth major precept.
14. If a bodhisattva, at the sight of someone else regarding his/her enemy with innate kindness, goes to that person's place who is acting in this way and says: "Excellent! Excellent! But how can you treat this person with innate kindness? It is an inauspicious appearance." This is called violating the fourteenth major precept.
15. If a bodhisattva, when seeing someone fighting against others, goes to help that person and uses strength to fight the other people, this is called violating the fifteenth major precept.
16. If a bodhisattva discovers someone else's secret affairs and slanders that person and causes grief and anger for the person by making it known to the four assemblies, then this is called violating the sixteenth major precept.
17. If a bodhisattva, when seeing or hearing of another's benevolent deeds, doesn't have any word [of praise] for it, this is called violating the seventeenth major precept.
18. If a bodhisattva, while walking on a deserted road, sees people building stupas, or sees people building hermitages, but doesn't go to help them, this is called violating the eighteenth major precept.
19. When seeing or hearing of someone who has left good spiritual friends (*kalyanamitra*) and is getting involved with bad spiritual friends, if a bodhisattva never praises that person by saying how lucky they would be to leave the bad spiritual friends and get involved with good spiritual friends, this is called violating the nineteenth major precept.

20. A bodhisattva should not go to places where s/he can get into trouble, such as the areas where ill-bred persons live,<sup>49</sup> the places of evil people, fierce dogs, and members of the two vehicles, *sravaka* [and *pratyekabuddha*], except if there is urgent business, otherwise this is called violating the twentieth major precept.

21. If a bodhisattva sees, hears, or suspects butchering, s/he should instantly think inwardly that one who eats meat destroys the seed of great benevolence and will commit a major wrong. Saying that there is no harm from eating [meat] without seeing, hearing, or suspecting the butchering, this is called violating the twenty-first major precept.

22. If a bodhisattva, when seeing, hearing, or suspecting butchery, pretends not to see, hear, or suspect butchery, and if s/he eats the meat, then s/he is against the treasury of all the Buddhas of the past, present and future, as well as disregarding the benevolence of all the Buddhas of the past, present, and future. To consider this person as worth of honor, this is called violating the twenty-second major precept.

23. If a bodhisattva understands expedient means and knows the capacity of [certain] sentient beings, and says that not speaking will incur the retribution of sin, this is called violating the twenty-third major precept.

24. While keeping these precepts if a bodhisattva sees Huazhu, Xugongzang, Guanshiyin, or any other bodhisattva, he cannot tell people about it, such as his seeing or not seeing them or other matters about seeing them, nor that he saw those Princes of Dharma, and so forth. If he says that he sees them, he will get white blotches on his body and encounter things which hinder the Way, and sometimes may become dull-witted, green-blind, or dizzy; or he may receive the sickness of delusion from ignorant discrimination of the essentials of the Buddhist dharma. Those who slander these precepts will also receive misfortunes like these.

Sometimes there are people who uphold these precepts, but do not propagate them to outsiders [saying] "I have seen these things." Those who do not speak out for seven days, then for their remaining days they will already have gone outside [the path] and will not be able to speak.

Good sons, these are called the twenty-four precepts of a bodhisattva-mahasattva.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Ananda Guruge, *Humanistic Buddhism for Social Well-Being* (Los Angeles: Buddha's Light Publishing, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> See Whalen Lai, "Dating the *Hsiang-fa chueh-i ching*," *Annual Memoirs of the Otani University Shin Buddhist Comprehensive Research Institute* 4 (1986): 61-91.

<sup>3</sup> See H. Saddhatissa, *Buddhist Ethics: Essence of Buddhism* (New York: George Braziller, 1970) and S. Tachibana, *The Ethics of Buddhism* (London: Oxford, 1926).

<sup>4</sup> See Whalen Lai, "Chinese Buddhist and Christian Charities: A Comparative History," *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 12 (1992), 5-33.

<sup>5</sup> For a discussion of how this threefold ethic correlates with the division of the Declaration of Human Rights, see David Chappell, *Buddhist Peacework* (Boston: Wisdom, 1999), p. 213.

<sup>6</sup> See Leslie Kawamura, ed., *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhism* (Waterloo, Canada: Canadian Corporation for the Study of Religion, 1981) and Taigen Daniel Leighton, *Bodhisattva Archetypes* (New York: Arkana Penguin, 1998).

<sup>7</sup> The most comprehensive study is the classic collection of 200 different bodhisattva precept texts by Ono Hodo, *Daijo kaikyō no kenkyū* (Studies in Mahayana Precept Scriptures) (Tokyo: Rishosha, 1954).



<sup>8</sup> Leo Pruden, "Some Notes on the *Fan-wang-jing*," *Indogaku Bukkyo gaku kenkyu* 16.1, pp. 925-915.

<sup>9</sup> The analysis and comparison of these three sets of bodhisattva precepts draws from an earlier study by the author entitled "Universal Bodhisattva Social Ethics," in *Bulgyohak Nonchong* (Essays on Buddhist Studies: Commemoration of the Sixtieth Birthday of President Jeon Chong-yoon), ed. Sixtieth Birthday Commemorative Committee (Seoul: Chontae Bulgyo Moonhwa Yon-goowon, 1999), 1343-1388.

<sup>10</sup> For a translation and analysis of the Fangdeng Repentance Ritual, see Daniel Stevenson's Columbia University PhD dissertation, *The T'ien-t'ai Four Forms of Samadhi and Late North-South Dynasties, Sui, Early T'ang Buddhist Devotionalism* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilm, 1987): 175-187 and 538-597.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179.

<sup>12</sup> The two translations of the Brahma-net Scripture into English are by the Buddhist Text Translation Society of Dharma Realm Buddhist University, *The Buddha Speaks the Brahma Net Sutra* (Talmage, California: Dharma Realm University, 1982) and by Hubert Nearman, *Buddhist Writings on Meditation and Daily Practice* (Mount Shasta, California: Shasta Abbey, 1994), 49-188.

<sup>13</sup> Having received a bodhisattva ordination in China, Saichō not only sought to establish a bodhisattva ordination platform in Japan beginning in 818, but he openly renounced the Hinayana precepts that he had received earlier and threw away his begging bowl. See Hisao Inagaki, "The Bodhisattva Doctrine as Conceived and Developed by the Founders of the New Sects in the Heian and Kamakura Periods," in Leslie Kawamura, ed., *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhism* (Waterloo, Canada: Wilfred Laurier Press, 1978), p. 168.

<sup>14</sup> Based on the list offered in *The Buddha Speaks the Brahma Net Sutra* (Talmage, California: Dharma Realm Buddhist University, 1981), I:96.

<sup>15</sup> Based on *The Buddha Speak the Brahman Net Sutra* (1981), I:102, with slight revisions.

<sup>16</sup> Based on *The Buddha Speak the Brahman Net Sutra* (1981), I:105, with slight revisions.

<sup>17</sup> Based on *The Buddha Speak the Brahman Net Sutra* (1981), I:133, with slight revisions.

<sup>18</sup> Based on *The Buddha Speak the Brahman Net Sutra* (1981), I:151, with slight revisions.

<sup>19</sup> See the account in R.E. Emmerick, *The Sutra of Golden Light* (London: Luzac, 1970):87ff.

<sup>20</sup> Based on *The Buddha Speak the Brahman Net Sutra* (1981), I:162-163, with slight revisions.

<sup>21</sup> T 24.1034-1075. See the translation by Shih Heng-ching, *The Sutra on Upasaka Precepts* (Berkeley: Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai, 1991).

<sup>22</sup> T 24.1050b.3-5; *Sutra on Upasaka Precepts* (1981), 75.

<sup>23</sup> Founded in 1966 by Ven. Zheng-yan, the Ciji Gongdehui had grown to four million members in 1994, nearly 20 percent of Taiwan's population, and gives over US \$20 million each year in charity. See Chien-yu Julia Huang and Robert P. Weller, "Merit and Mothering: Women and Social Welfare in Taiwanese Buddhism," *Journal of Asian Studies* 57.2 (May 1998), 379-396.

<sup>24</sup> *Sutra on Upasaka Precepts* (1981), 17.

<sup>25</sup> *Sutra on Upasaka Precepts* (1981), 124-125.

<sup>26</sup> *Sutra on Upasaka Precepts* (1981), 55.

<sup>27</sup> *Sutra on Upasaka Precepts* (1981), 35-36 and 114.

<sup>28</sup> *Sutra on Upasaka Precepts* (1981), 41.

<sup>29</sup> *Sutra on Upasaka Precepts* (1981), 187.

<sup>30</sup> See David Chappell, ed., *Buddhist Peacework: Building Cultures of Peace* (Boston: Boston Research Center, 1999).

<sup>31</sup> Jamie Hubbard, *Absolute Delusion, Perfect Buddhahood: The Rise and Fall of a Chinese Heresy* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), p. 196-198. For the political role of Gao Jiong (= Kao Chiung), see Arthur Wright, *The Sui Dynasty: The Unification of China, A.D. 581-617* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), pp. 73-75, 139-141 and 166.

<sup>32</sup> Jamie Hubbard, *Absolute Delusion, Perfect Buddhahood*, p. 187.

<sup>33</sup> T 85.1336ab, tr. by Kenneth Chen, *The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), p. 295. Chen goes on to quote from another sutra, the *Fo-shuo chu-te fu-t'ien-jing* (T 16.777b) that lists seven activities constituting the field of merit:

1. Construction of stupas, monastic halls, and pavilions
2. Establishment of fruit gardens, bathing tanks, and trees
3. Dispensing medicine for the sick
4. Construction of sturdy boats to ferry people
5. Construction of bridges
6. Digging of wells along well traveled roads
7. Construction of toilet facilities for the convenience of the public

<sup>34</sup> *Abridged Explanation of the Inexhaustible Storehouse*, 155-156, trans. by Jamie Hubbard, *Absolute Delusion, Perfect Buddhahood*, pp. 176-177.

<sup>35</sup> "In medieval times, Buddhists in China and Christians in Europe observed an almost identical set of 'corporal works of mercy': feeding, clothing, hospitality, visiting the sick and the imprisoned, and burying the dead. There is no way that one can be said to be necessarily better or more loving than the other. They were alike in their caring." Whalen Lai, "Chinese Buddhist and Christian Charities: A Comparative History," *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 12 (1992), p. 6.

<sup>36</sup> Kenneth Chen, *The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism*, p.298.

<sup>37</sup> Whalen Lai, "Chinese Buddhist and Christian Charities: A Comparative History," *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 12 (1992)," p. 16.

<sup>38</sup> For a brief introduction to these movements, see Charles Jones, *Buddhism in Taiwan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999), p. 187-213.

<sup>39</sup> See Christopher Queen, ed., *Engaged Buddhism in the West* (Boston: Wisdom, 2000), pp. 95ff and 372ff.

<sup>40</sup> The mailing address for the Project Dana headquarters is 902 University Avenue, Honolulu, Hawaii 96822 and its phone is 808-945-3736.

<sup>41</sup> Thich Nhat Hanh, *Interbeing: Fourteen Guidelines for Engaged Buddhism* (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1993 revised edition).

<sup>42</sup> The Earth Charter is available on the internet at: [www.earthcharter.org](http://www.earthcharter.org).

<sup>43</sup> Amy Morgante, ed., *Buddhist Perspectives on the Earth Charter* (Boston: Boston Research Center for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, 1997).

<sup>44</sup> See especially the new Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the World's Religions that was drafted at McGill University and is elaborated in Joseph Runzo, Nancy Martin, and Arvind Sharma, ed., *Human Rights and Responsibilities in the world religions* (Oxford: Oneworld Press, 2003).

<sup>45</sup> This point is often made by Rita Gross, who wishes that she did not have to keep observing that little has changed. See her "Why (Engaged) Buddhism Should Care About Gender Issues," in David Chappell, ed., *Socially Engaged Spirituality* (Bangkok: Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation, 2003), p. 70-74.

<sup>46</sup> While the Sarvodaya movement has many publications in Sri Lanka, brief introductions in recent Western publications included A.T. Ariyaratne, "Sarvodaya Shramadana's Approach to Peacebuilding," in David Chappell, *Buddhist Peacework* (Boston: Wisdom, 1999), p. 69-77, and George Bond, "A.T. Ariyaratne and the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement in Sri Lanka," in Christopher Queen and Sallie King, ed., *Engaged Buddhism: Buddhist Liberation Movements in Asia* (Albany, New York: SUNY Press, 1996), p. 121-146.

<sup>47</sup> I am indebted to Ven. Juo-hsueh for her help in translating these precepts.

<sup>48</sup> This prohibition against wantonly destroying things with fire is the Fourteenth Minor Precept according to the *Fan-wang jing* (T 24.1006a6-90).

<sup>49</sup> Literally, *candala*, who was considered in ancient India to be an outcast, the lowest and most despised half-breed who had a shudra father and a brahman mother, and who carried a flag and sounded a bell to warn of his presence. Nevertheless, people of this class were accepted as converts for ordination by the Buddha.