

advice of wise men, by seeing for ourselves and so forth.

Chapter five is regarding the truth. Truth is considered as the central concept in eastern as well as western philosophies. Buddha realized the truth in the process of the practice of meditation. This chapter has four parts. The whole chapter is on the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism.

Chapter six is on the central conception of Buddhism, that is to say, the theory of Dependent Origination. This chapter includes **Causality talks (Methodology Study), Human person and causality-talk, Causality-Talk and Logical Nature, Model** and its application.

Chapter seven is **Facts to Ethics (Methodology study 2)**. This chapter is an investigation of Perception, Perception and methodology, Methodology unfolds further. Chapter eight Knowledge and Super-Perceptual Knowledge: Language-Games. This chapter consists of Issue about knowledge, Knowledge as a state of mind, Sense perceptual models and saving knowledge. Chapter nine is Nibbana and the Language Game. It has been mentioned at the beginning of this chapter that many traditional Buddhist do not accept Nibbana as a concept. In this chapter the canonical interpretations of Nibbana have been taken up for discussion. Quotations from Udana and Upasivamanavapucchā of the Suttanipata have been quoted and discussed.

The last chapter of the book is **The Dhamma: Its Family of Concepts**. This chapter begins with a quotation of Wittgenstein. This is the conclusion of the book. It is mentioned that the Dhammic concepts cannot be accommodated within a set of epistemological concepts. Emancipation as against the epistemological dialectic is the basic ideology in Buddhism.

In conclusion I would like to mention that the book is well written. Philosophical methodology has been applied throughout the book. At the end of each chapter valuable end notes are included. There is a useful bibliography at the end of the book. One deficiency is that book does not have an

index. This can be considered good contribution to Buddhist studies.

– Kottegoda S. Warnasuriya

## I-kuan Tao

**By Joseph J.F. Chen**  
**Authorhouse, Bolomington, Indiana,**  
**2005, 191 pp.**  
**ISBN: 1418495166**

I-kuan Tao is the name of an important lay movement founded in 1930. During the last seventy-six years, its stature and number of believers has rapidly increased all over the world. However, I-kuan Tao as a new religion is still not very well known to the general public. The book titled *I-kuan Tao* was written by Dr. Joseph J.F. Chen as his doctorate dissertation in the Religious Studies at University of the West. It is the only authoritative work available to English readers on one of the most recent and significant religious developments in recent decades.

Dr. Joseph J.F. Chen is currently the Vice President and Secretary General of World I-kuan Tao Headquarters in Los Angeles, California. For this book, he has collected all available, published and unpublished documentation, including oral information from elders in the organization. His research data not only increases the awareness of the history and development of the organization but also for the first time presents the system of beliefs, rites, and practices of I-kuan Tao.

This book is divided into two parts. The first part discusses the main aspects of I-kuan Tao as a new religion: the origin, consolidation between 1930 and 2002, founder, mission, fundamental beliefs and teachings, rituals and ethics of I-kuan Tao. The second part of the book outlines its institutional history.

The first chapter elucidates the history of I-kuan Tao. It was originally based in China and its followers were persecuted by the Chinese government. Later on, I-kuan Tao developed in Taiwan and was legalized there in the late 1980s. Since then, it has been rapidly spreading to countries around the world, such as Hong Kong, Korea, Japan and Okinawa, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Canada, Brazil, Australia, and the United States. There are I-kuan Tao temples in more than eighty countries. I-kuan Tao has received national governmental recognition all over the world. This has enabled further advocacy of Confucianism and I-kuan Tao overseas, allowing the teachings to cross cultural and political boundaries. In October of 1966, the World I-kuan Tao Headquarters was established in Los Angeles. It is now estimated that I-kuan Tao has two million adherents and seven million disciples around the world.

The Objectives of I-kuan Tao are as follows,

1. To explain the five moralities and eight virtues;
2. To propagate the holy intention of sages;
3. To follow and retrieve ancient propriety;
4. To embark on a new beginning in one's life;
5. To use the mortal body to cultivate the true-self;
6. To retrieve our nature;
7. To activate the extreme virtue of human conscience;
8. To educate the self-first and reform others afterwards;
9. To purify the world in order to attain peace;
10. To transform diverse peoples to form a harmonious international community.

The modern founder of I-kuan Tao has combined and integrated spiritual ideas, practices, and beliefs within a religious movement which includes Taoist and Confucian thought, as well as activities

based on the two figures: Lao Mu, the Eternal Primordial Mother, and Maitreya, the future Buddha. I-kuan Tao members regard themselves to be one big family. Hence the mission of I-kuan Tao is:

“Everyone should recognize this absolute truth and pursue

The Tao to return to their true being, transform the tainted and

corrupted world to heavenly land and unite the world in peace.”

The unique characteristic of I-kuan Tao is “Unity of the Tao in every tradition and every situation.” With its openness and inclusivity, I-kuan Tao has also embraced and incorporated teachings of Christianity, Confucianism, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism and Hinduism. Many Tao practitioners study the Bible in search of the common thread of truth and wisdom. It also adapts some rituals of other religions, such as vegetarian diet. Because I-kuan Tao is a lay religious movement, there is little attention paid to the construction of temples or shrines. By seeking the commonality of all faiths and bringing everyone, regardless of religion, closer to the spiritual essence, I-kuan Tao lives up to its name. It is the ideal of harmonious connections – the Tao that unifies all with oneness.

In I-kuan Tao, Tao is considered to be the absolute universal truth, and it does not require any doctrine or institution to prove this status. Religion is the practice that may emerge from the Tao. The members of I-kuan Tao see the Tao as the spiritual basis for humanity, and it is therefore internal. Religious practices are external and derive from a fundamental need of human beings. The Tao does not rely on reasoning; it is the very essence of everything.

The Eternal Primordial Mother is a crucial part of the beliefs and practices of I-kuan Tao. She has appeared over time as being the ruler and very essence of the universe. She was born before the

earth was formed. From the point view of I-kuan Tao, the world is filled with different names of her.

The integration of different religions is a tendency during the current age. I-kuan Tao, as a new religious movement, aims to unify the world and work toward building world peace by integrating the five main world religions. Dr. Chen expresses his gratitude to University of the West for offering the Department of Religious Study and helping its students from different religious backgrounds pursue their significant research.

– Yung Dong

## **The Length of One Breath: Living Well the Buddhist Way**

**By Kodo Matsunami  
Buddhist Searchlight Center, Tokyo,  
Japan, 2005.**

Life has become much easier in the contemporary world. To live a decent life, one needs enough money to meet his needs. It seems that our needs for materials have become insatiable as new fashions emerge in an endless stream. No matter how much money he has, no matter how many new things he has obtained, we seem to feel dissatisfied. We often hear people complaining, grumbling, and expressing their disappointment over the situations.

*The Length of One Breath: Living Well the Buddhist Way* by Professor Kodo Matsunami aims to give the key to the questions people frequently ask about the meaning of modern life. The book is divided into five chapters with 94 subchapters. And each subchapter is two-three pages in length. They cover almost all aspects in life in times of success, failure, perplexity and loneliness and deals with attitudes toward people and work and the importance of a sound mind. What is

more important, the author incorporates the wisdoms of both East and West into these chapters, enabling readers to share the gems of world civilizations. In fact, the book reminds me of *The Popular Collection of Traditional Chinese Wise Sayings* which contains rhymed stanzas.

Chapter 1 touches on the subject of the right way to live. The author tries to illustrate his points by introducing the concepts of Buddhism. For instance, the fourth subchapter entitled “Life is but a fleeting moment” quotes the Buddha’s teaching on our life as “the length of a single breath.” Indeed, life is a moment in space. Discussing the topic of “No one is perfect,” he advises readers by quoting Confucius’ words: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” Similar teaching can be found in the Bible.

One thing necessary to be pointed out is that on page 79 the author describes what happened with Japan during World War II. As “the Imperial Japanese Army, bent on acquiring new territories and drunk with its successive victories, forgot all about prudence and tactics.” The words are partially correct in describing Japanese army’s loss sense of prudence whereas the fact is that they were engaged in an unjust war against the Chinese people. It was not simply “acquiring new territories,” but a war of invasion full of atrocities.

The second part totaling 21 subchapters deals with admonitions for oneself. The chapter urges readers to perfect themselves by self-cultivation. When people are successful, they probably are proud of their achievements. Overdone, they begin to fail. Thus, the author offers his advice – to do away with presumptuousness, empty the desire and so on. In fact, his advice is valuable for modern people to purify themselves – “Slough off the scum from your soul,” “Do not allow yourself to be obsessed by delusion,” “You are not the only one having a hard time at the moment,” and so forth. In these short subchapters, the