

Celebration Of The
2557th Anniversary Of The Buddha

Multi-Faith Forum on
“Buddhism and Interfaith Dialogue:
Reconciliation through Education”



From 23 to 24 May 2013 • UNESCO HEADQUARTERS PARIS FRANCE



宗 教
 主要的 尊重的
 教育 教學 教化
 宗教是人類主
 要的教育重要
 的教學尊重的
 教化以仁慈博
 愛為根本以倫理
 道德因果為枝葉
 以戒定慧為花果
 以覺了諸法實相
 為究竟(即是究竟
 哲學究竟科學)
 故曰宗教是人類主
 要的教育
 淨土時年
 八十七

“Religion” in Chinese consists of two characters: *Zong* (宗) and *Jiao* (教)

Zong (宗): major, important and reverent

Jiao (教): education, teaching, edification

So when used together, the Chinese definition of “Religion” (*Zong Jiao*) will be clear: major education, important teachings and reverent edification. The root of religion gives rise to compassion and loving-kindness; just like a tree springs from the root. Religious teachings of morality, virtue and the Law of Cause and Effect are like the branches and leaves of a tree. Attaining wisdom through practicing precepts and meditative concentration is similar to flowers giving rise to fruit. Its ultimate goal is to realize the true reality of the universe. (Religion encompasses both the highest philosophy and the most advanced science.) That is why religion (*Zong Jiao*) is important education for every human being.

Chin Kung, at the age of 87

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- Date: 23rd May 2013
- UNESCO Headquarters Paris France

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Concept Note

— Vesak 2013 at UNESCO

Historical perspective

Vesak marks a threefold manifestation in the life and times of the Buddha. The first being the birth of Prince Siddhartha Gautama in Lumbini in Nepal which was followed by Siddhartha Gautama's supreme attainment as the Buddha, the Enlightened One and the third event that is marked is the Buddha's passing away over 2500 years ago at Kusinagara.

The first decision to celebrate Vesak was formalized at the first Conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists held in Sri Lanka in 1950, although the traditional commemoration of this day had been carried out for centuries.

It was in 1999 that the United Nations General Assembly passed Resolution 54/115 recognizing the Day of Vesak as an International Day of Observance at the United Nations Headquarters and other United Nations offices.

Commemorations in Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka, Vesak is considered both a religious and cultural festival. It is a day on which temples are filled with devotees, many of whom make long pilgrimages to places of significance in the country. At temples devotees offer flowers, light lamps and burn incense. These traditional observances have their value in satisfying the religious and emotional needs of the people. As it is mainly a religious event, for Buddhists, religious observances form the main activities of the festival. Many of them spend the whole day in the temple and reaffirm their determination to follow the teachings of Buddha.

Of added significance is the participation of all communities throughout the island in the illumination of the country. This is done with traditional Vesak lanterns which adorn many a garden and street as both the young and old come together to make bamboo framed lanterns that are covered in coloured tissue paper and illuminated with a candle or an oil lamp. Also found are special hoardings of coloured bulbs which are known as "Thorang". They depict ancient stories, including those of the life and times of the Buddha and his teachings.

The offering of food to people plays an important role in the country as wayside eateries known as "Dansalas" are set up by neighbourhoods, communities, companies and even individual families, at which free food is

distributed. In the evenings, many people travel long distances to view the Vesak illuminations found around the country and the *dansalas* are places at which these thousands receive food. Devotees offer food known as Dhana as a sign of sharing with joy and peace, with others.

During the Vesak period, the selling of alcohol and meat is prohibited and abattoirs are also closed. The period of Vesak is used as an opportunity to reiterate the determination to lead noble lives, to develop one's mind, to practice loving-kindness and to bring peace and harmony to humanity.

Vesak 2013 at UNESCO

It is proposed to focus attention this year on the need for all communities and religious denominations to work towards peace and harmony, the prevalence of which would benefit all of humanity, through interfaith and intercultural dialogue.

Sri Lanka, a country that has emerged from thirty years of conflict, is today at peace. Steps taken towards further strengthening this peace and ensuring reconciliation at all levels of society can only be done through education and dialogue.

It is with this aim that His Excellency President Mahinda Rajapaksa has decreed that the Permanent Delegation of Sri Lanka to UNESCO in collaboration with UNESCO and the Pureland College, commemorate Vesak as an opportunity to understand the teachings of the Buddha and focus on interfaith dialogue. The intention of which is the fostering of harmony, through knowledge, understanding and compassion towards all beings.

It is proposed that the theme of the symposium be the following: "Buddhism and Interfaith Dialogue: Reconciliation through Education".

This would provide an opportunity to reflect on the teachings of the Buddha as well as the contributions made by the other three main religions in Sri Lanka, notably Christianity, Hinduism and Islam to peace.

It would also provide a platform to focus on the need for reconciliation, not just in terms of a post-conflict situation, but also with regard to reconciling all human beings, one with another, and doing that through understanding of the other, which is gotten through education.

The envisaged programme would entail a symposium on Friday, 24th May 2013 which would contain the Inaugural Session, under the patronage of the Deputy Director General of UNESCO and with the participation of the President of the General Conference of UNESCO (The Director General will be out of Paris during this week and hence unable to be present herself)



Given the integral role that the Founder and Head of Pureland College, Ven. Master Chin Kung has played in ensuring that peace and harmony are cornerstones upon which we construct our lives, his presence and participation is sought to deliver the key note address on this occasion.

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There would also be a video message from His Excellency the President of Sri Lanka and it is proposed to have a video message from the Secretary General of the United Nations, if possible.

The second segment of the morning's event would comprise of a round table deliberation, with reflection on the contributions of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and Islam to reconciliation and peace, and due focus on education, reconciliation and dialogue as key factors in the effort to achieve harmony

At the conclusion of the symposium, the reflections made therein may be published as a journal in due course.

Ministry of
External Affairs
Sri Lanka





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இலங்கை சனாதிபதி
President of Sri Lanka

Most Venerable Master Chin Kung Maha Thero
Pure Land Learning College Association Inc
57, West Street, Toowoomba, QLD 4350
Australia

Most Venerable Thero,

Vesak is celebrated by Buddhists all over Sri Lanka to signify the birth, enlightenment and parinirvana of Sakyamuni Gautama Buddha and His universal message of peace to mankind.

In 2013, Vesak day will be commemorated on May 24th with many religious and cultural festivities. This act of celebrating generates an atmosphere full of spiritual awakening and inspiration to cultivate human values such as generosity, respect for the elders and care for all the sentient beings. Moreover, there is an illuminating cultural expression mixed with the rites and rituals.

It is my great honour to invite Most Venerable Thero to visit Sri Lanka to participate in the Vesak celebrations this year and to deliver Dhamma sermons to Buddhist devotees in my country. I look forward to hearing from Most Venerable Thero in this regard.

Please accept Most Venerable Thero, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Respectfully Yours,

Mahinda Rajapaksa

February 21, 2013



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இலங்கைச் சனநாயக சோசலிசக் குடியரசு
Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka



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சனாதிபதி அலுவலகம்
PRESIDENTIAL SECRETARIAT



February 21, 2013

Most Venerable Master Chin Kung Maha Thero
President
Pure Land Learning College Association Inc
57, West Street, Toowoomba, QLD 4350
Australia

Most Venerable Thero,

Arrangements are underway to hold the 2013 Vesak Festival on May 23rd and 24th in Paris by Sri Lanka's Embassy in France with the patronage of Pure Land Learning College Association and the participation of Ms Katalin Bogyay, President of the General Conference of UNESCO and Permanent Delegate of Hungary to the UNESCO. This is a valuable opportunity to celebrate the Vesak festival in a European country and to spread Lord Buddha's message among people of different nationalities in the world.

I wish to inform Most Venerable Thero that His Excellency Mahinda Rajapaksa, President of Sri Lanka, assures of the fullest cooperation of the Government of Sri Lanka to make this event a success. We consider that the cooperation of the Most Venerable Thero and the Pure Land Learning College which has been rendering a yeoman service to the activities of the UN will greatly contribute to the event's success. Most Venerable Bodagama Chandima Nayaka Thero, Advisor to His Excellency on International Religious and Cultural Affairs, will be facilitating activities related to this event.

I take this opportunity to convey to Most Venerable Thero my best wishes for good health and personal well-being.

Yours respectfully,

Lalith Weeratunga
Secretary to the President of Sri Lanka



6th May 2013

Ven. Master Chin Kung
Founder and Head of the Pureland College
Toowoomba
Australia

Ven. Sir,

Commemoration of Vesak – 23rd and 24th May 2013 – UNESCO, Paris

The Permanent Delegation of Sri Lanka to UNESCO is in the process of finalizing arrangements for the commemoration of Vesak, a thrice blessed day marking the Birth, Enlightenment and Passing Away of the Buddha, which is also an International Day of Observance, so declared by the United Nations back in 1999.

As such, we intend commemorating this important event at UNESCO on Thursday, 23rd and Friday, 24th May 2013 with a series of events under the theme of “Buddhism and Inter-Faith Dialogue: Reconciliation through Education” Given that you Reverend Sir visited Sri Lanka in November 2012 when an Ambassadorial Delegation led by the President of the General Conference of UNESCO were also present in the country and the integral role you have been playing or decades in promoting inter-faith dialogue and calling on people everywhere to note the importance of such reconciliation for peace, understanding and harmony, we would be most honoured to welcome you Reverend Sir for these events and especially to deliver the Keynote Address at the main symposium on Thursday, 23rd May 2013.

In addition, we have allocated two hours that afternoon for a Special Lecture from you Reverend Sir, and are happy to note that representatives of Member States have even requested a portion of your Special Lecture to be dedicated to meditation as they wish to understand the basics and engage in a short period of meditation that afternoon. We would be most grateful if you could incorporate this into your Special Lecture, Reverend Sir.

That evening we hope to have a Vesak Concert and would be honoured if you would be present on this occasion too.

On Friday, 24th May 2013, which is Vesak Day *per se*, we intend starting our day's activities with religious observances and thereafter having several panel discussions on area of reconciliation, peace and to share the example of inter-faith dialogue in action, as is the case in the model city of Toowoomba in Australia.



We live in a world where tolerance and understanding are scarce. It is through education that peoples everywhere would become knowledgeable not just of their own religious beliefs but also of the faiths and theories of others. Such aspects are necessary for the achievement of peace and harmony. The work carried out by you, Reverend Sir and the Pureland College that you head is highly meritorious as it takes note of the need for each of us to examine ourselves, explore knowledge around us and also that which has been passed down over the centuries and live lives that are more enriching and which contribute to the creation of a more harmonious and peaceful environment.

Your presence, Reverend Sir, and the message you would bring will make a lasting contribution to world peace as a whole and more importantly will make a difference in the lives of everyone who attends the events being planned.

I wish to make mention at this time the appreciation and gratitude of my Delegation, my country and actually Sri Lankans everywhere, for the support that you, Reverend Sir and the staff of the Pureland College have rendered towards the events being planned. It is heartening to note that united we can achieve much and the events being planned are testimony to that which can be accomplished in the greater good of promoting dialogue and understanding among peoples everywhere.

We look forward to welcoming you, Reverend Sir to commemorate Vesak 2013 in Paris.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. S. Perera', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

W. S. Perera
Chargée d'Affaires a.i.



長幼有序
朋友有信

德五常

仁義禮智信

國四維

禮義廉恥

孝悌忠信仁愛

和平是為仁德

佛十善六度六和敬

God, Saint, Love

Embracing benevolence is the first virtue of our true nature.

From the natural love that exists between parents and children,
the five moral disciplines in human relations developed.

This Love is the source of Chinese culture.

A natural love between parents and children

Distinct responsibilities for husbands and wives.

Mutual obligations between leaders and their followers.

A natural order between the old and the young.

自性第一德親。仁。自
 神
 聖
 愛
 父子有親。生。出。五。倫。五
 常（中華文明之源頭）
 父子有親
 夫婦有別
 君臣有義

Trust between friends.

The Five Constant Virtues are “Benevolence, honor, courtesy, wisdom, and trustworthiness.”

The Four Cardinal Principles are “Propriety, honor, integrity, and humility.”

The Eight Virtues are “Filial Piety, sibling respect, loyalty, trustworthiness, benevolence, love, harmony, and peace.”

The Ten Virtues, Six Paramitas, and Six Harmonies are the teachings of the Buddha.

佛法大同之治

佛所行處。國邑丘聚。靡不蒙化。

天下和順。日月清明。風雨以時。

災厲不起。國豐民安。兵戈無用。

崇德興仁。務修禮讓。國無盜賊。

無有怨枉。強不凌弱。各得其所。

無量壽經第三十七品

淨土恭錄時年八十七

Achieving Great Harmony Globally through Buddhism

Wherever the Buddha goes, whether to a country, a city, or a village, people will be moved and will benefit.

All the lands will be enveloped in peace and harmony. The sun and moon will shine clear and bright.

Wind and rain will come when needed. Disasters and epidemics will not occur.

The country will flourish and the people will enjoy peace. There will be no need for soldiers or weapons.

Virtue will be revered and benevolence will be promoted. People will practice courtesy and humility.

There will be no thieves or robbers in the country. There will be neither injustice nor resentment.

The strong will not dominate the weak. Everyone will naturally get their fair reward.

Chin Kung, at the age of 87



“What Should We Do When Hearts are Corrupted and Society is in Chaos?”

— *On Toowoomba, Australia as a Model City
of Peace and Harmony*

- May 24, 2013, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris

By Venerable Master Chin Kung AM

“What Should We Do When Hearts are Corrupted and Society is in Chaos?”

— On Toowoomba, Australia as
a Model City of Peace and Harmony

By Venerable Master Chin Kung AM

May 24, 2013, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris

**Dear Mrs. Katalin Bogyay,
President of the General Conference
of UNESCO, Ambassadors, and
distinguished guests,**

I am very grateful for the kind invitation from UNESCO. It is a great honor for me to visit Paris again and share our ideas with you. There is an old saying in China that goes like this, "If children are not well taught, people's mindsets will take a turn for worse. If families are not well managed, society will be in chaos." Our world has never been so chaotic. Today, morality and ethics are disappearing from society. International conflicts have

escalated. Acts of terror have become more frequent. Environmental pollution is more serious. Natural disasters have intensified. People who have observed this phenomenon are deeply concerned. The ever-worsening human mindset is the true cause of the chaos. The most urgent issue at the moment is how we can seek to return people's mindset from bad to good. Doing so, we will be able to resolve world crises and restore peace and harmony with long-term stability. Today, we are here to celebrate Vesak Day at UNESCO. Taking this rare opportunity, please allow me to share (1) what I have learned from



Mahayana Buddhism, which I have studied for sixty-two years, and (2) the experience of building Toowoomba into a city of peace and harmony, with all the distinguished guests and everyone present.

I. Unkind Human Mindset is the Root of the Chaotic Society

1. Lesson learned from Mencius' meeting with King Liang Hui

About 2300 years ago, Mencius, a famous Chinese philosopher, went to the kingdom of Wei and was received by King Liang Hui. The king asked Mencius, "You came from afar. You must have some methods that can benefit my country." Mencius replied, "Dear king, why are you talking about benefit? It is benevolence and honor that I advocate. If a king is only interested in his country's benefit, his ministers are only interested in their own clan's benefit, common people are only interested in their own benefit, and

everyone in a country only cares for their own benefit, then this country is at peril." According to Mencius, "benevolence and honor" are part of our inherent conscience and it has the ability to bring stability to our society. Therefore, benevolence and honor is the real benefit for us. But if we neglect benevolence and honor, and look only for self interest, a society will be in chaos and a nation will be in danger. These words of Mencius precisely describe the world today.

2. Sages and Philosophers of the World All Pointed Out the Principle of Causality

The sages and philosophers of old all pointed out that evil thoughts and evil actions of human beings will elicit negative responses and disasters. Modern quantum physicists have proved the causality behind the theory of "mind over matter."

- The Bible says, "Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for their wrongs . . ." (The Bible, Colossians 3:25, New International Version)



▶ Lesson learned from Mencius' meeting with King Liang Hui

- The Quran says, "Whatever calamity may befall you [on Judgment Day] will be an outcome of what your own hands have wrought." (Quran 42:30)

- *Chronicle of Zuo (Zuo Zhuan)* says, "If man abandons the five constant virtues, monstrosities will arise. (The five constant virtues are benevolence, honor, courtesy, wisdom, and trustworthiness. "Monstrosities" means the tendencies of evil and wrongdoing.) *The Book of History (Shang Shu)* says, "On the good-doer brings down all blessings, and on the evil-doer brings down all miseries."

- *Accounts of Request and Response*, a Daoist text, says, "Misfortune and blessings do not come to us without reason, we bring them upon ourselves. The consequences of good and evil deeds are like the shadow, following the body wherever it goes."

- Buddhist sutras say, "All dharmas are created by the mind and altered by the consciousness. Greed can bring floods. Hatred can bring fire. Ignorance can bring wind disasters. Arrogance can bring earthquakes. Doubt can bring disasters of landslides and sinkholes. Selfishness can bring conflicts and confrontations. Evil minds can bring disease and pestilence."

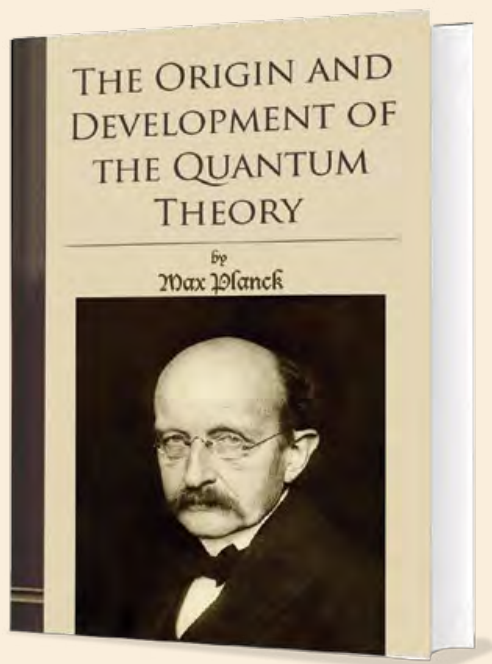
Therefore, we can see that sages and philosophers of both the East and the West stated in unity that "Good has its reward, and evil has its recompense." When human beings use any available means to attain their ends and pursue their own interests, natural and man-made disasters will appear. If we want to turn people's hearts from bad to good and resolve the crises of the world, we must rely on the only means—education: education on morality, virtues, causality, and religious teachings.



II. Religious Education is Crucial in Resolving World Crises

1. The Real Meaning of Religion

The Chinese term for religion is *zongjiao*. This term in Chinese is inspirational. *Zong* means "primary, important, and to be revered." *Jiao* means "education, teaching, and transformation." Hence, when the Chinese put these two characters together, it means primary education, important teaching, and a transformation to be revered. When first founded, each religion was a form of multicultural social education. Each founder was a social educator. Religious education contains five categories: morality, virtues, causality, philosophy, and science. Also, there is no religion that does not propagate peace and harmony, mutual caring, loving kindness, and universal love.



▲ Max Planck, a famous German scientist who was the father of quantum physics, spent his life studying and researching matter.

This is exactly the prescription for integrity and uprightness building in shaping the human mindset, and is what the world needs most urgently today.

2. The Inspiration of the Studies of Quantum Physics

Modern scientists found the incredible energy associated with the power of will. "A simple thought seems to have the power to change our world."

Max Planck, a famous German scientist who was the father of quantum physics, spent his life studying and researching matter. He said, "I can tell you as a result of my research about atoms this much: There is no matter as such. . . . This mind is the matrix of all matter." Modern quantum physicists founded string theory, claiming that elementary particles (for example, a neutrino is a subatomic particle much smaller than an electron) that formed matter are generated by vibrations, just like the sound created by the vibration of stringed instrument. The vibration is extremely fast, and its root origin is the wave generated from thoughts or will.

Therefore, matter does not exist independently. Matter is an illusion manifested by the accumulation and amalgamation of thoughts. The basic building block is thought. If there's no thought, then there is no matter. This conclusion resonates with what is written in Buddhist sutras. The Buddha said that with an unenlightened single thought, the manifestation of karma appears. The manifestation of our karma is generated from the vibration of our thoughts. From

the vibrations, spiritual phenomena and material phenomena appear. Once we grasp this principle, we will know that matter will change in accordance to our thoughts.

Some modern scientists bring up a recent scientific concept of "mind over matter." If we can understand this, we will find the way to resolve the crisis of our globe. American author, Lynne McTaggart, reveals in her book *The Intention Experiment: Using Your Thoughts to Change Your Life and the World*, that collective will can heal and renew our planet. If there are eight thousand real practitioners who highly focus their will, such an act will be enough to influence the whole world and eliminate/reduce calamities.



▲ In June 2010, Ven Master Chin Kung was invited to visit the Vatican and exchanged ideas with His Eminence Jean-Louis Pierre Cardinal Tauran, President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue.

The teachings in the *Flower Adornment Sutra* tell us that the universe is the "manifestation of our mind and changes according to our consciousness." This is the truth that transcends the passage of space and time. The power of will can resolve conflicts and disasters. Therefore, positive thoughts, such as "love" and "compassion," are extremely important, and religious education can awaken these kind thoughts in all people.

3. The Pope's Concern and Its Solution

In the last one to two hundred years, religious rituals and ceremonies have gradually been given more emphasis, and the learning and practicing of the essential teachings of religions have been neglected. This has contributed to the misunderstanding that religions are superstitious. In 2010, I visited the Vatican, Pope Benedict XVI, and Cardinal Tauran who told me that the number of Catholics is declining each year. This trend is of great concern. I suggested that religions cannot only focus on rituals and ceremonies, we also need to focus on learning and practicing the essence of the sacred texts of our religions. This is the only way to restore the vitality of our religions. I spoke to Pope Benedict about the importance of religious education for the Catholic church. Churches were originally schools in which the teachings of God were shared by the priests daily to transform the people. Doing the above, the Vatican and Rome could become a Catholic city of sacred teachings, and demonstrate the sacred teaching of Catholic saints and sages to the world. Should this be done, religions would no

longer be treated as superstition and would be respected by all.

Religion is the key to world peace and harmony. Education is the key to revitalizing religions. In order to re-energize religions and to purify human mindsets, the first priority is to restore the true nature of religion, which is education. All saints and sages of each religion advocated and practiced their teachings. Jesus taught for three years, Confucius five, Mohamed twenty-seven years while the Buddha taught for forty-nine years. They are good examples for all people. I followed the example of the Buddha and have taught on the sutras for fifty-five years now, and I strongly believe in this practice. Even though I am

eighty seven years old, I dare not relax. I teach daily, and my recorded teachings are then put on the Internet for distribution. I believe there have been positive effects in changing the mindsets of people. Hence, I affirm that religious teaching can resolve crises and promote peace and harmony. Specifically, education is of primary importance for self-cultivation to establish one's destiny, for embarking in a business and managing a family; for establishing a nation and leading its people; for creating a society that is courteous and honorable; for bringing forth social stability, peace and harmony; for creating prosperity and peace to the people; for establishing a glorious era marked by lasting peace; for establishing heaven on earth; and for the Pure Land."

Venerable Master Chin Kung's Suggestion:

Vatican City, as well as Rome, should become the center of Catholic edification. The sacred teachings of the Bible should prevail in the city. Such promulgation of religious education will turn the city of into a Holy Place of Catholicism. Should Vatican City be a vivid role model of practicing the God's teaching on earth, people with different faiths would naturally follow the suit, thus the whole world would be in peace and harmony.



安身立命。教學為先。創業齊家。教學為先。
建國君民。教學為先。禮義之邦。教學為先。
穩定和諧。教學為先。國豐民安。教學為先。
太平盛世。教學為先。長治久安。教學為先。
諸佛報土。教學為先。極樂世界。教學為先。
仁義禮智信。五常五戒。人棄常則妖興。失道而
後德。失德而後仁。失仁而後義。失義而後禮。禮是道
德最後底綫。失則天下大亂。人性本善。本善即是佛性。故
釋迦曰。一切眾生本來是佛。佛。福慧圓滿具足之人也。

淨空時年八十有六



孝是中華文化根。敬是中華文化本。落實在孝
 親尊師。中華傳統文化。五倫、五常、四維、八德。是
 也。文化是民族之靈魂。教育是文化之生機。故

Education is Most Essential

Filial piety is the root of traditional Chinese culture.

Respect is the trunk of traditional Chinese culture.

These are reflected in the performance of duties to parents and in the respect to teachers.

The essence of traditional Chinese culture is embodied in the Five Human Relationships, the Five Moral Principles, the Four Moral Standards and the Eight Virtues.

Culture is the soul of a nation.

Education is the hope of a cultural revitalization.

Therefore, education is of primary importance for self-cultivation to change one's destiny, for managing a business and a family, for building a country and guiding its people, for creating a society that is courteous and righteous, for bringing forth social stability and harmony, for creating wealth and peace for the people, for establishing a glorious era marked by lasting peace, and even for establishing the lands of Buddhas, for the Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss.

Benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and trustworthiness are the Five Moral Principles, the Five Precepts. When men abandon the constant course of virtue, then monstrosities appear.

When the Tao was lost, virtues appeared; when virtues were lost, benevolence appeared; when benevolence was lost, righteousness appeared; and when righteousness was lost, proprieties appeared.

Propriety is the bottom line of morality.

When proprieties are lost, the entire world would be in turmoil.

Human nature is originally good.

The innate goodness is the Buddha-nature.

Therefore, Buddha Shakyamuni said, "All sentient beings are originally the Buddha."

The Buddha is the person who is replete with utmost good fortune and wisdom.

*Chin Kung
 At the age of eighty-six*

I gave a keynote speech on September 25, 2011 at the Malaysian Multifaith Forum which was attended by over ten thousand people. I suggested that all religions should set up experimental zones of sacred teachings to educate and transform their adherents with the essential sacred texts, which incorporate teachings on spirituality, culture, morality, virtues, and causality in the hope of transforming human mindsets, enhancing harmonious and peaceful society, and upholding the true teachings. My suggestions received positive acknowledgments from Dr. Mahathir, former Prime Minister of Malaysia, and various leaders of major religions.

III. Cooperation between Religions is the Critical Step

1. My conversation with Dr. Mahathir

In 2005, a greatly concerned Dr. Mahathir, former Prime Minister of

Malaysia, asked me a question, "In your opinion, can there still be peace in this world?" I answered, "If we could fulfill four conditions, then peace and harmony could be achieved." He asked, "Which four?" I replied, "First, all countries need to treat one another equally and get along harmoniously. Then, the same needs to be applied to political parties, ethnic groups, and lastly, religious groups. If these four conditions could be achieved, and everyone treated one another equally and got along harmoniously, conflicts could be resolved and peace would be realized." Upon hearing my words, Dr. Mahathir was silent for a long while. I then said, "These conditions are truly difficult and complicated to fulfill. But if we start with religious harmony, it can be achieved." Dr. Mahathir understood immediately.

2. Why Does World Peace Begin with Religious Harmony?



▲ Former Prime Minister of Malaysia Dr. Mahathir with Ven Master Chin Kung.

As everyone knows, religious beliefs and faiths are powerful spiritual forces. However, if such devotion of faith and passion are misled and become confrontational and incite conflicts, they will bring disaster—even annihilation—to humanity. Historically, religious wars and conflicts all proved this point. On the other hand, if these forces were to be guided in a good way such that people from different religions and faiths learn from and understand one another, then eventually religions could cooperate in unity and friendship. This strong, concerted force of faith will melt away all forces of negativity and darkness, and as such it would resolve all conflicts and confrontations. It would bring peace, harmony, happiness, and stability to humanity.

(1) All religions are from the teachings of one true god whose wisdom is fundamentally "benevolence, compassion, and universal love." From this perspective, all religions can cooperate with one another in unity.

- The Christian sacred texts say, "God loves all people" and "Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also must love one another."
- Islam teaches, "Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate." and "There's only one guideline for being moral. It's being selfless, do good with universal love for all."
- Zoroastrianism teaches, "One should love others as oneself. This is as the faith of man should be."
- Sikhism teaches, "More than all else do

I treasure at heart is love, which makes me live an eternal life in this mundane world."

- Bahá'ism teaches, "The purpose of the one true God manifesting Himself to our world is to summon all mankind to uphold truthfulness, sincerity, filial piety and trustworthiness."
- Buddhism teaches in the *Infinite Life Sutra*, "Revere the saints and respect the decent [people]. Be benevolent, compassionate, and universally loving."

Why is it that the core teachings from all saints and sages are about benevolence, compassion, and universal love? It is because the universe was created by one creator. The creator is the true body of all phenomena and the universe. Here, Judaism, Catholicism, and Christianity are referring to God. In Islam, the creator is Allah. In Buddhism, it is the true nature, or Dharma nature. In Taoism, it is called Tao. It creates all phenomena and also exists in all phenomena. It is everywhere. It is everything. "All phenomena" means everything, including us human beings. Therefore, it is our true nature (our true form). We and all phenomena are from the same origin. Everything is one entity. Therefore, when we love all people, when we love everything, we actually and truly love ourselves.

Consequently, we realize that the sacred texts of all religions teach us to learn from God, Buddha, Saints and Sages to love all beings equally, to learn to have "a mind that encompasses everything; a heart that reaches throughout the whole universe," to learn to be selfless, to learn to abandon



▲ Representatives of nine religions in Singapore prayed for the Millennium Dinner Party.



▲ At the religious forum attended by more than ten thousand people on 25 September 2011 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and Former Prime Minister Tun Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad (R7) delivered keynote speeches promoting religious harmony in Malaysia. The religious leaders, united hand-in-hand like one family, prayed for world peace together.



▲ In November 2012, the president of Sri Lanka initiated and held a forum, titled "Inter- Religious and Cultural Conference," with over 1000 participants coming from all over the world, including twenty-five UNESCO Ambassadors and delegates from China, Australia, Singapore, and Malaysia, etc.



▲ Representatives from ten religions from Singapore and Australia prayed for world peace on the stage.



▲ On September 25th, 2011, a multi-faith forum was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. With “Scared Teachings to Resolve Crisis” as its theme, the forum attracted more than 10,000 people. Venerable Master Chin Kung and Prime Minister Tun Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad (R7) delivered keynote speeches to promote multi-faith harmony. The religious leaders prayed for world peace hand-in-hand like members of the same family.



▲ In May 2012, we had our first interfaith peace forum in Thailand. Delegates from various countries were invited and leaders and representatives of many religions attended.

evil and promote goodness, and to learn to let go of greed and raise our spirituality while dedicating ourselves to helping and serving all beings so they can end pain and suffering, and attain happiness.

(2) Furthermore, religious adherents outnumber non-adherents globally.

If each religious adherent could follow their own teachings, treat other religious adherents equally, live in harmony, respect and care for each other, and cooperate, then this strong and positive force will surely be able to resolve all conflicts and promote world peace.

Hence, not only all religions should live in harmony and cooperate, we should all learn from each other. Religious adherents should use the loving kindness demonstrated by the saints and sages in our daily lives. Each of us should start from ourselves—expand our broadmindedness, love our religion as well as all other religions, and learn sacred texts of ours and others. Furthermore, we should realize that all religions are really just part of one family, all religions are about social education of "benevolence, compassion, and universal love."

For a society to be peaceful, harmonious, and prosperous, education is the key. The *Book of Rites* stated, "Education is the priority in establishing a country and leading its people." Religious prayers are temporary answers but not a cure for our problems. The cure lies in moral education, which transforms the mindsets of the people and enables all to "abandon evil and promote goodness, change from

being deviated to being decent, and correct one's mindset." We must do our best in realizing and practicing these religious teachings, and promote their values. While each religion teaches their sacred texts continuously, with the passage of time, it would surely help in dissolving disasters and promoting peace and harmony.

3. Successful Cases

Between 1999 and 2001, we assisted in facilitating the mutual cooperation among Singapore's nine religions and faiths. We helped start organizing an annual interfaith dinner function for the IRO of Singapore (Inter-Religious Organization). We invited leaders of different faiths to form an interfaith delegation and visited places like China, UNESCO, etc. to enhance communication among different faiths. We also contributed to the charitable works initiated by each of the religions and faiths. We invited representatives from each religion and faith to come and give talks on their respective faiths in the Singapore Buddhist Lodge. In those three years, we witnessed how the nine religions worked together like brothers and sisters. They mutually cared for, learned from, and cooperated with one another regardless of faith. Faith leaders and workers grew together and at the same time, served the community and the society.

I later went to Australia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, and Sri Lanka, where we initiated interfaith harmony and dialogues, and the results have been very encouraging.

For the past ten years in Australia,

we have supported and helped set up in Griffith University a Multi-faith Centre, which has seen wonderful results in interfaith harmony. For example, in February 2009, the Pure Land Learning College Association (PLLCA) and Griffith University jointly held a "Multi-faith Summit: One Humanity, Many Faiths" in Brisbane City Hall with attendance of 288 representatives from 148 religious and faith communities in Asia and Australia. Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, former Indonesian President also attended, even though he was ill. All leaders from different religions and faiths engaged actively in the discussions and benefited from the summit. At its conclusion, most regarded it as a milestone event for multifaith cooperation in Australia, and it had a profound

influence on future interfaith work.

In December 2011, the PLLCA and the University of Southern Queensland jointly held an interfaith forum, "A Harmonious World Begins With the Mind." More than 1200 people from the local community and overseas attended. The representatives from different religions and faiths had in-depth discussions in relation to the sacred texts and essential teachings of their respective faiths. The conclusion was that each and every religion teaches the message from the same God, and the message is the "teaching of love." There should be no fundamental conflict among religions, and all religions could cooperate and work together in harmony.



▲ Representatives of nine religions in Singapore prayed for the Millennium Dinner Party.



▲ PM Lee Hsien Loong attended a dinner for Multi-Faith organised by Iman Habib Hassan. In his speech, PM Lee ascertained Ven Master Chin Kung's sincere effort in uniting the various religions.



▲ In June 2000, major religion representatives in Singapore, was invited to give a Multi-faith introduction and teaching at the Singapore Buddhist Lodge.

In Malaysia and Indonesia, I have participated many times in various interfaith forums and dialogues. On the issue of religious harmony, I received great support from Dr. Mahathir, the former Prime Minister, and Mr. Najib, the current Prime Minister, as well as Mr. Yudhoyono, the current Indonesian President. I have been invited many times to participate in interfaith dialogues with Malaysian and Indonesian inter-religious delegations to China and to the Vatican. During these visits, leaders of different faiths were like a big family as they had direct and candid exchanges, and their friendships were greatly deepened. Organizing groups of different religions to travel together is the best way to promote communication among religions, and there should be more such activities.

In May 2012, we had our first interfaith peace forum in Thailand. Delegates from various countries were invited and leaders and representatives of many religions attended. Seventeen UNESCO Ambassadors also attended, setting a new milestone in Thailand's Interfaith peace journey.

In November 2012, the president of Sri Lanka initiated and held a forum, titled "Inter- Religious and Cultural Conference," with over 1000 participants coming from all over the world, including twenty-five UNESCO Ambassadors and delegates from China, Australia, Singapore, and Malaysia, etc. Thorough discussions were held and enriching tours were some of the highlights, which successfully created an environment for dialogue and communication that generated great impact on many levels.



▲ In the year 2000, Amitabha Buddhist Association of Queensland erected a plaque to show its gratitude towards the aboriginal contribution to Australia. The aborigines have a long history in Australia.



▲ Griffith University and Pureland Learning College jointly organised the Interfaith Summit for Peace and Harmony at City Town Hall in Feb 2009. “One Humanity, Many Faiths” was the theme.



▲ Photo taking during Multi-cultural forum at University of Queensland on March 17th 2012.



▲ Ven Master Chin Kung and all guest speakers giving speech during forum.

IV. Toowoomba as a Model City of Peace and Harmony

1. The Origin

The biggest crisis in our world today is a lack of confidence. Most people don't believe there can be true harmony in our society, and people no longer believe in lasting peace for the world. The best way to resolve such a crisis of confidence is to set up experimental points or model cities to show the world. Such points of interests will be in many ways more scientific to the eyes of the public, thus fostering more confidence for everyone.

Toowoomba is a charming small city with over 90,000 residents, with people from all over the world. The city prides

itself on having more than eighty ethnic groups, over one hundred languages, as well as different races, cultures, traditions, and religions and faiths. It is indeed a multicultural city. Because of these unique characteristics, helping build Toowoomba as a model city of peace and harmony truly is that much more significant and meaningful.

In 2001, the Pure Land Learning College Association was founded in Toowoomba. In the past ten years, the PLLCA has enjoyed a great relationship with the local communities and religious organizations. Every week, the PLLCA hosts a Saturday night friendship dinner and a multicultural forum. People of different races, religions, and linguistic



* Religious symbol given by IRO (S)



◀ In May 2000, Singapore Inter-Religious Organisation visited China.

Interfaith Trip with Indonesia religious repretative to the Egypt in June 19-25 2004. ▶

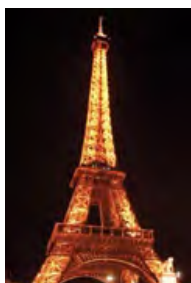
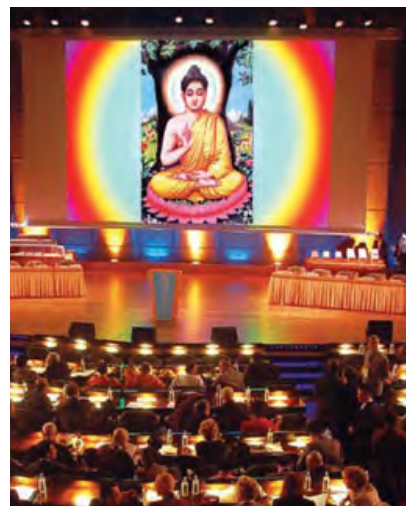


In May 2008, Malaysian Multi-faith Tour of Harmony visited China. ▶



Interfaith Trip to the Vatican in May 2010. ▶





▲ Responding to UNESCO's invitation, Pure Land Learning College organised a 3-day event, titled "2550 years of Vesak Celebration" at UNESCO HQ in Paris in Oct 2006.



In May 2012, we had our first interfaith peace forum in Thailand.





In November 2012, Sri Lanka had their first interfaith peace forum.



backgrounds exchange views with one another in a friendly atmosphere. All are welcomed to attend the dinner and be part of the family. In March 2012, during the interfaith forum in Toowoomba, a proposal was raised, and the religious representatives and residents attending all agreed to "Build Toowoomba into a Multicultural Model City of Peace and Harmony."

We hope to treasure and preserve the special characteristics of each ethnicity and culture. With a big heart of loving kindness, we accept one another; we respect one another and treat one another equally and harmoniously, so that whoever comes to Toowoomba would see people of different skin colors and different cultural backgrounds thriving and prospering together. We hope to help set up a model city of peace and harmony where people

genuinely respect and care for one another, and work and cooperate in unity. And we would like to show the whole world that a harmonious society with multi-ethnicity, multiculturalism and multifaith harmony is achievable; the vision of one big family comprised of all the people of the world is also realistic.

2. How to Build A Model City of Peace and Harmony

A model city of peace and harmony is to be led by the joint efforts from various religions in Toowoomba. We have established the Goodwill Committee of Toowoomba where regular meetings are held to facilitate communication. Those of different religions would participate in activities run by other religions and assist with charitable works. They would also learn from one another and share their respective teachings with the public, and in



practice, become one big family.

With equality and a harmonious atmosphere, all religions and faiths will revisit and focus on education to promote the good teachings in each religion, and together all religions will shoulder the responsibility to transform society. With this commitment, we surely will be able to turn back the downward trend of morality and bring positive influence to the mindset of the people in our society. When we practice and realize peace and harmony in this manner, we will generate a tremendous constructive force, and such force will resonate through our living environment. Toowoomba would see less disasters and the world would see less calamities. Once religious harmony is in place, ethnic groups, political parties, and each country would be able to coexist in harmony. Toowoomba is on its way to achieving this goal, and the journey so far has been inspiring.

Each year, we will organize four interfaith forums for exchanging ideas and views. We will share our visions, experiences, methods, and results with the public. We welcome people from Australia as well as from the whole world, people who are conscientious in building peaceful and harmonious cities, to come and visit Toowoomba to gain insights and methodologies, and to help their own hometown to realize the peace-building project.

Should we be able to make Toowoomba a model city and sustain our effort for more than a year, we would like to set up a satellite TV station and broadcast the daily lives of learning of Toowoomba residents

to the world, presenting the goodness of a harmonious and peaceful life. By that time, many people from all around the world will wish to visit Toowoomba, the pure land on earth, learn from its experiences, and even to move there. The more prosperous Toowoomba becomes, the more affirmation the world would feel towards the benefit of peace and harmony. Increasing numbers of people will adjust their mindsets for the better. People will treat others with equality and harmony. When the majority of the populations in the world share these benevolent thoughts and deeds, natural and man-made disasters will gradually decrease until eventually there will be none.

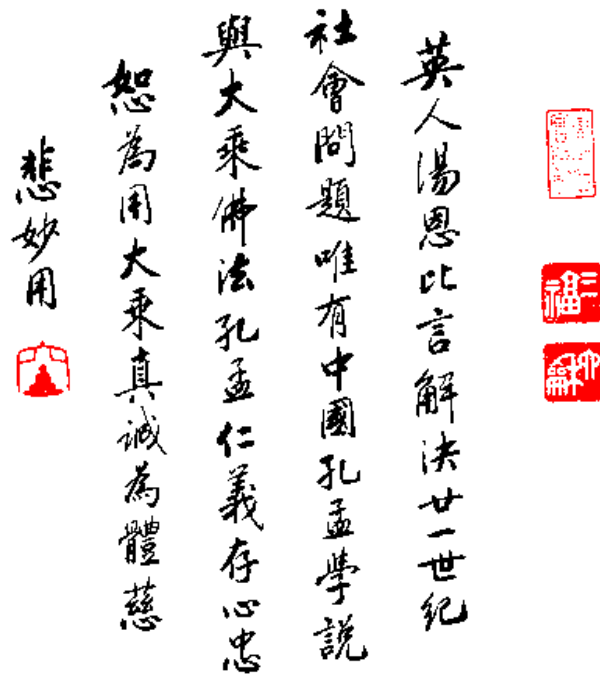
The power of example is tremendous. If the model city of Toowoomba became a success, the whole world would be encouraged and moved. Similar practices would follow and more model cities of peace and harmony would spread and blossom around the world.

3. The Four All-Embracing Methods

How do we promote the ideas of building Toowoomba as a model city of harmony? We follow the teachings of the Buddha, and we apply the Four All-embracing Methods. In short, the Four Methods are the methods of interacting with the public. They are (1) the practice of giving, (2) kind words, (3) beneficial acts, and (4) cooperation.

(1) The practice of giving. Put simply, this is to give gifts and be generous in sharing. In Toowoomba, we have been doing what we can to support public charitable works. We make annual





▲ The renowned British historian, Dr. Arnold J. Toynbee, once said that in order to resolve the social problems of the twenty-first century, we must rely on the teachings of Confucius and Mencius, and on Mahayana Buddhism. The doctrines of Confucius and Mencius cherish loving-kindness, duties and obligations. The expression of it is loyalty and forgiveness. Sincerity is the essence of Mahayana Buddhism and it can be used ingeniously.

donations to the local hospital and to the hospice centre. For the past ten years, we have hosted free Saturday night friendship dinners for all local residents. Multicultural forums have also been held in a friendly environment for residents to discuss issues. Because of the air of friendship, we have made many friends and built strong relationships with the local residents and neighbors. Nowadays when asked about our association, many people would say, "There are good people there!" This is the model on which the PLLCA has built a solid foundation for peace and harmony to be carried on.

(2) Kind words. We should speak truthful words that are caring and beneficial to others. We praise highly other religions' teachings and their charitable works. We

also encourage every faith to introduce their teachings to people, and to serve the community as a whole, and facilitate communication and exchanges with other religions. Enmities and conflicts between religions are often the result of fighting for adherents. To solve this problem, we need to emphasize that all religions are equal. They are each the best of all. To entice and convert others is wrong. By using kind words, we would enable each religion to have peace of mind and rid them of unnecessary worries. The use of kind words is a good way to clear obstacles in the promotion of religious unity.

(3) Beneficial acts. We need to act in such a way that benefits others. When other religions are in need, we reach out to help them without hesitation. A few years



▲ In the past ten years, the Pure Land Learning College Association has enjoyed a great relationship with the local communities and religious organizations. Every week, the PLLCA hosts a Saturday night friendship dinner and a multicultural forum.

ago, a Christian primary school wanted to set up a computer room but was short of funds. Upon learning their need, we quickly acted to help them. The PLLCA set up a Multi-Faith Multicultural Centre, and we employed Mr. Haniff, a senior faith worker from Singapore as the coordinator, to promote religious dialogue and unity in Toowoomba. We have seen wonderful results.

(4) Cooperation. We participate in the same activities, and we actively engage in each other's religious events while learning from each other. The PLLCA provides a venue and invites faith representatives to give talks on their own religious teachings, enabling the local residents and different faith adherents to know more about all

religions. I have given talks on the Rosary at a Catholic church, and I have also shared my study notes on the Quran. I once told Dr. Mahathir that, "When I read the Bible, I am the most faithful Christian. When I read the Quran, I am the most faithful Muslim. If I am not, I would not be able to understand the true meaning of the sacred texts."

Apart from the above, we organize group travel. Last year, the Toowoomba religious delegation visited Thailand in May and Sri Lanka in November to attend multifaith forums hosted by the local government and NGOs. Leaders from various religions are busy and may not have too much time to communicate. However, while everyone was travelling



▲ A model city of peace and harmony is to be led by the joint efforts from various religions in Toowoomba.



together, we had ample time to talk and share our views on many things. The trips enhanced our mutual understandings and also deepened our friendship.

I sincerely hope that UNESCO representatives can come to Toowoomba at the end of June this year to further experience in person, the inspiration and true gentle power of interfaith unity. This would definitely contribute greatly to diminishing confrontations and doubts among different religions, and would be an empowering element in promoting world peace.

V. Traditional Chinese Culture and the Theory and Experience on Harmonious Society

1. Traditional Chinese Culture is a Culture of Benevolence, Love, Peace, and Harmony for All Humankind

The 5000-year long history of the Chinese culture has emphasized wisdom, theories, methods, experiences, and results of cultivation of oneself, managing the family properly, governing a country successfully, and bringing peace and equality to the world. Arnold Toynbee, the famous British historian once said, "In order to solve the social problems of the twenty first century, one must rely on Confucian teachings and Mahayana Buddhism." The essence of Confucian teaching is "benevolence, honor, loyalty, and forgivingness," while "sincerity and compassion" are the fundamental teachings of Mahayana Buddhism. Among the

four ancient civilizations, the Chinese civilization has been able to maintain relative long-term stability and unity. This is achieved in accordance with the ancient teachings of the Five Human Relationships, Five Constant Virtues, Four Maintenances, and Eight Virtues found in the traditional Chinese culture.

Humankind's diverse traditional cultures have no boundaries. They are the heritage of all humanity. Traditional Chinese culture also belongs to the whole world. These teachings and their guidance have been effective in the past; they can be equally effective for society now and in the future. Such teachings transcend time and space. We have proven their effectiveness in purifying mindsets of people in the town of Tangchi in Lujiang, China. We believe strongly that the promotion of Chinese



traditional culture will be a decisive help in ensuring long-lasting peace and stability for our world.

2. Prime Minister Najib's In-depth Understanding of Traditional Chinese Culture

Traditional Chinese culture has received the full attention of and endorsement by Mr. Najib, Prime Minister of Malaysia. In October 2011, Mr. Najib attended the groundbreaking ceremony of the Malaysian Academy of Han Studies where he gave a memorable speech.

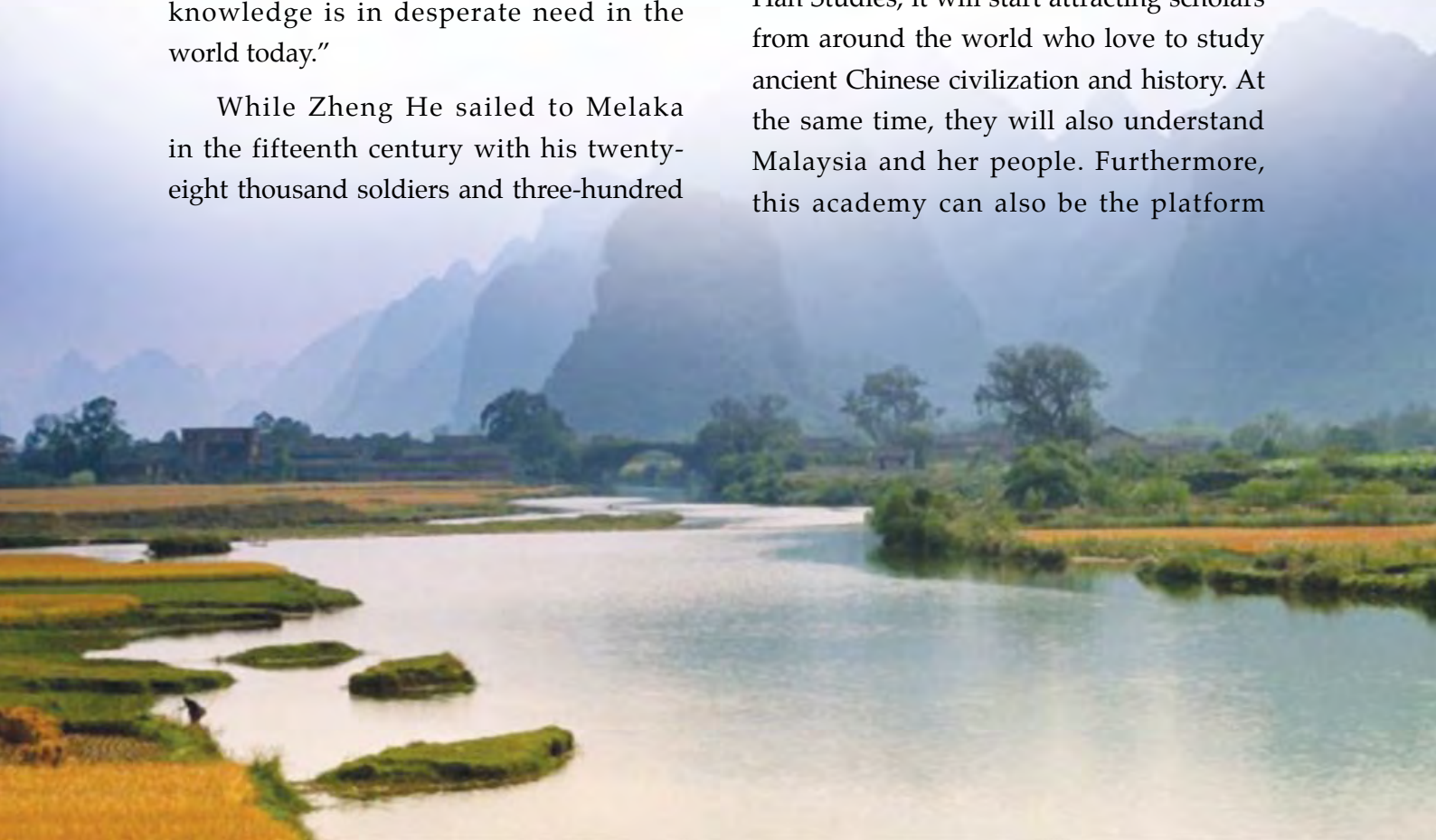
He said, “Among the ocean-like amount of books and knowledge, it is immensely meaningful to have selected Han studies (Sinology studies) as the core area of research, especially since Han study can provide a noble living philosophy for human interactions and help people to respect one another mutually. I think such knowledge is in desperate need in the world today.”

While Zheng He sailed to Melaka in the fifteenth century with his twenty-eight thousand soldiers and three-hundred

seventeen ships, he was not there for conquest. On the contrary, he was there on the mission of building friendship between the Ming dynasty of China and the Malay Empire. He held out a hand of friendship and built a long-lasting relationship with the Malay Sultan and the Malaysians.

Mohammed said, “Although the knowledge is as far away as in China, we still have to seek it.” This famous quote taught us to understand how great civilizations developed over hundreds and thousands of years. As leaders and as government officials, we all need to equip ourselves with these value and qualities. That is why we are building the Malaysian Academy of Han Studies in Melaka in order to make Malaysia a ray of hope for all humanity.

I am very happy that in the early stages of building the Malaysian Academy Of Han Studies, it will start attracting scholars from around the world who love to study ancient Chinese civilization and history. At the same time, they will also understand Malaysia and her people. Furthermore, this academy can also be the platform



to connect Chinese and Malaysians at a deeper level.

The words of Mr. Najib, the president of Malaysia, are acute and exceptional. They represent the view of people who have insight into Chinese traditional culture.

3. The Reign of King Wen and Wu thirty-two hundred years ago

According to Chinese historical records, about thirty-two hundred years ago, in the early stages of the Zhou dynasty's reign, King Wen, later with his son King Wu, ruled Xi Bo. The two kings ruled their country with virtue, and their country became the model for the other eight hundred territorial rulers. All other countries regarded King Wu as the Son of Heaven and followed his rule, and the Zhou dynasty lasted eight hundred years.

When King Wen was in power, a dispute broke out in two neighboring countries, Yu and Rui, and the two kings went to Zhou to seek King Wen for arbitration on the territorial dispute. After entering Zhou territory, both kings saw the courteous society of Zhou and became ashamed. They realized that "our argument is a shame in the eyes of the Zhou," and they settled their dispute. From this story, we are able to learn that the rule of benevolence, honor, courtesy, wisdom, and trust had been deeply rooted in the hearts of the citizens in Zhou, and it also influenced their neighboring countries.

4. The Successful Experience Early in the Qing Dynasty

Since ancient times, Chinese saints and sages have always taught with the whole world in mind. Instead of limited



▲ In October 2011, Mr. Najib, Prime Minister of Malaysia, attended the groundbreaking ceremony of the Malaysian Academy of Han Studies where he gave a memorable speech.

thoughts of a single country or race, the idea of justice for all was embraced. The Mongolians and the Manchus both invaded China, yet the Chinese accepted them, and eventually the cultures merged as one. One may ask "When the Manchus entered China, it only had an army of 200,000. How could they successfully rule a population of over ten million, and for nearly three hundred years?" Furthermore, there had been well-known prosperous periods of over one-hundred twenty years. Why? The Manchurian emperors appeased the Chinese people by respecting the Chinese culture. They took the lead in studying the culture more vigorously than anyone else. Emperors in the early Qing dynasty, Shun Zhi, Kang Xi, Yong Zheng, and Qian Long, were all adepts at the traditional Chinese teachings including Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. These emperors also acted as examples by inviting virtuous scholars to the royal court to explain the meanings of sacred texts of these different schools of thoughts to the top government officials. Such deeds gained the support and admiration of Chinese intellectuals and the public. We are able to find the descriptions in *Daily Talks on Four Books* in the Complete Library of the Four Branches of Literature, to see the grand scale of those royal classics from the Qing dynasty.

5. Tangchi as an Experimental Town in a Modern Setting

In November 2005, I set up The Lujiang Centre of Cultural Education in my home town, a small town called Tangchi, in Lujiang County, Anhui Province, China. A Confucian traditional text book, *Guidelines*

for Being a Good Person (Dizigui) was used as the core guiding principle to assist with the government's promotion of moral education for the people. A group of thirty-seven teachers were trained first. They all learned *Guidelines for Being a Good Person*, and, more importantly, they are practiced and applied the teachings in it when they went out in teams to introduce and impart these teachings of filial piety, sibling love, benevolence, and love to the local people. Within a few months' time, great improvement were witnessed in the local social trend, which proved that the "intrinsic nature of humans is full of goodness," and that people can easily be taught to become better. It proved that the teachings of saints and sages are still effective in modern society. In October 2006, thanks to the recommendation by the Thai ambassador to UNESCO, and in conjunction with World Fellowship of Buddhists (WBF), the PLLCA gave a three-day presentation and an exhibition at UNESCO headquarters, showcasing interfaith harmony and the results of our experimental town of Tangchi in relation to the teaching of *Guidelines for Being a Good Person*. We received positive recognition and acknowledgement from the UNESCO secretary general, ambassadors, and other peace workers. The event also proved that "all religions can cooperate in harmony" and that "people can be taught to become better."

6. The Renowned Period of Prosperity and Peace—The Tang Dynasty, an Era of Multiculturalism

(1) A Multifaith and Multicultural

Society that Coexisted in Prosperity

The Tang dynasty in China was an era of multifaith harmony and multiculturalism that coexisted in wonder and in prosperity. One of the emperors, Li Shimin, was a man of great magnanimity. He embraced and encouraged all. He humbly learned from each religious teaching and the teachings from various saints and sages. His actions inspired a whole generation of people to learn from saints and sages. Not only was he a benefactor of Buddhism, he was also a patron of all religions. He truly valued all religions, and he tried to maintain and protect them. Each religion was embraced and treated with equality. He regarded the virtuous and learned practitioners in each religion as the national teachers, and he consulted with them often.

In the ninth year of Li Shimin's rule, on the arrival of Christian priest Alopen, Emperor Li Shimin ordered Prime Minister Pang Xuanling to greet Alopen at the outskirts west of the capital. In the twelfth year, Emperor Li Shimin ordered the building of a Persian Temple by Imperial Decree and permitted the preaching of its religion. Another church was built in Yi Ning Fang in Chang'an, the capital of the Tang dynasty.

Islam was also introduced to China during the Tang dynasty because of interactions with Arabian countries. At that time, Prophet Mohamed was still alive and Waqqas, his disciple, went to Guangzhou and spread the teachings of Islam. The Tang government showed great acceptance and respect to the Muslims. The then





emperor also assisted in building a mosque by imperial decree for the settlement of the Muslim soldiers who came to China.

The Tang government treated all religions equally, as it knew religions were the good education of wisdom and experiences given by God and saints. Such teachings will teach and transform the public so the government can help the people live in harmony and, thus, help stabilize the society in peace. Dr. Toynbee once said that if he could choose to relive his life, he would abandon twentieth century London for China's seventh century Chang'an.

(2.) The Book that Leads to Stability and a Better World—*The Governing Principles of Ancient China*

The most significant achievement during Emperor Li Shimin's reign was the compilation of the book on governance; *The Governing Principles of Ancient China* (*Qunshu Zhiyao*).

The Governing Principles of Ancient China was compiled at the imperial decree of Emperor Li Shimin at the beginning of the Zhenguan Era, (599-649). He ordered his advisors, among them Wei Zheng and Yu Shinan, to select essential passages that provided insight into how past emperors governed the country. The passages were to come from the historical records, the Six Classics, the Four Collections of History, and texts from the Hundred Schools of philosophy. From these, the advisors were to extract the most important passages related to (1) cultivation of oneself, (2) managing the family properly, (3)

governing a country successfully, and (4) bringing peace and equality to the world. The resultant compilation is *The Governing Principles of Ancient China*, with excerpts from 14,000 books, 89,000 scrolls of ancient writings—500,000 words in all that covers sixty-five categories of books dating from the era of the Five Legendary Emperors to the Jin dynasty.

This is an invaluable book, which if used in the present time, it would allow us to examine and learn from our ancient history; and if passed down to our descendants, it would help and plan for our children in the future. Emperor Li Shimin was extremely pleased with the broad coverage and the concise nature of the compilation, and read the book daily. He said to those in charge of the compilation, "I owe it to you, my ministers, who have equipped me with knowledge of the past, so I would not be in doubt when confronted with various issues." The compilation had obviously contributed to the subsequent peace and prosperous period of the Zhenguan Era. This treasure is invaluable for all who are involved in the political arena.

The ancient cultural teachings of our ancient saints and sages can bring lasting stability and peace to the entire world. The most critical factors are for the learners to truly comprehend this traditional culture and eliminate doubt and have faith in it. Traditional culture and the teachings of the saints and sages is the natural outpouring of our true nature. These teachings transcend space and time; they are everlasting. The key to effective learning comes down to



two words: sincerity and respect. Without sincerity and respect for the teachings of the saints and sages, even if one read through every page of all the sacred texts, one would study in vain without real benefit. Confucius, the great sage who was well known to be a polymath, when talking about traditional culture and values, stressed that he only "retold ancient teachings and he did not create anything new" and he "believed in and favored the ancient teachings." These famous words expressed his sincerity and respect within. That is why he attained such a high achievement. He has been regarded as the "Most Venerated Sage Teacher" and is the "Role Model for Teachers Throughout All Ages." Confucius was a role model for us all in learning sincerity and respect.

Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, in his speech on the Three Principles of the People ("Principle of Nationalism 4th Lecture"), said, "The advancement in science and material civilization in Europe only happened in the last two hundred years or so. When it comes to the essence of political philosophy, Europeans can still turn to China for answers. Many people have come to appreciate how German scholars have contributed to the general knowledge of humanity. At the same time, German scholars are devoting their time to study the philosophies of China as well as Buddhism from India, to help us understand and remedy the inherent bias in the field of science.

The Governing Principles of Ancient China is the essence of Chinese political philosophy and can serve not only as an important reference book for leaders of all countries to make political decisions, it can also remedy the bias of modern science.

The ancient Chinese have passed down their wisdom, principles, methods, experiences, and results on the governing of a country. Such a wealth of experiences has been accumulated over thousands of years and endured the test of time. *The Governing Principles of Ancient China*, is invaluable and meaningful, especially for our modern world. Should all, including leaders at different levels, in various political parties, and of different countries, be able to bilaterally learn from these books and deeply understand it and implement its teachings, the day will soon come when a harmonious

society and a world with equality and peace will be realized.

Teacher Tsai Li-Hsu from Malaysia's Chung Hua Cultural Education Centre, has published selected sayings from *The Governing Principles of Ancient China* and named it *The Governing Principles of Ancient China 360* and translated it into English. This new selection is also known as *The Governing Principles of Ancient China*. On the Chinese side, Professor Yu Li, from the Party School of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, and her team of researchers, has also published *Connotation in Modern Chinese and Collection of Commentaries*, which explains the book further.

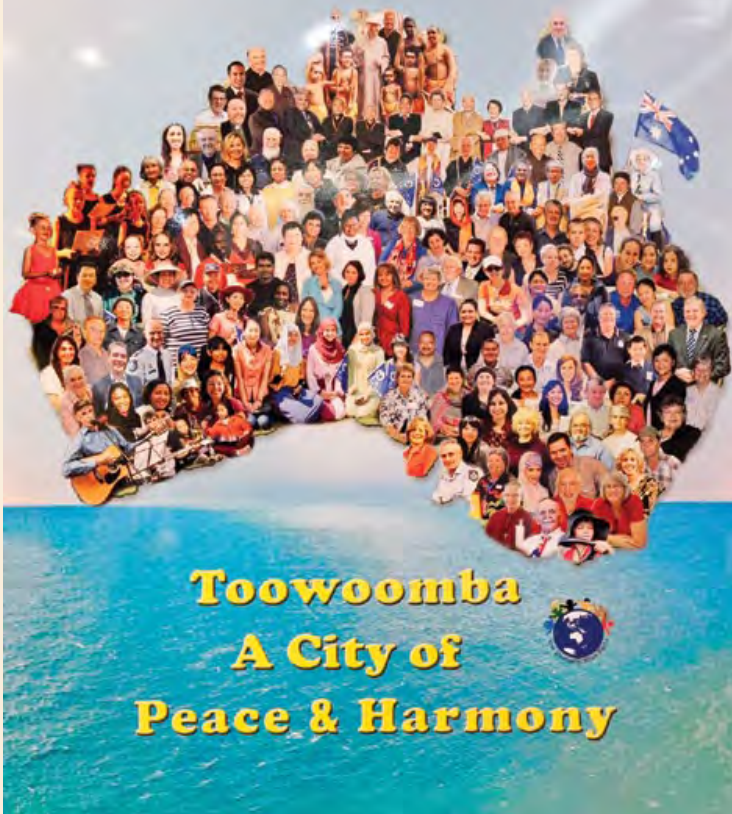
7. The Tool of Studying Traditional Chinese Culture

The complete treasure of the traditional Chinese culture lies in the Complete Library of the Four Branches of Literature. The best way to study the Chinese culture is to read the Complete Library of the Four Branches of Literature directly in Chinese, which requires the command of traditional Chinese characters as well as classical Chinese (wen yen wen) the traditional written language. Classical Chinese, a great invention of the ancient Chinese, is different from Latin-based languages in many ways. In Chinese, the written language (classical Chinese) is different from the daily spoken language. While the spoken form of the language evolves with the passage of time, the written form remains the same. Hence, the lineage of the language system does not change, and thousands of years later, today's Chinese

descendants can still read and understand the writings of the ancient past, and learn from their wisdom and experiences. The Chinese characters are symbols of wisdom. They are a heritage of humanity. Unfortunately, a change started to take place early last century and the Chinese started to use the vernacular style, or the plain language, and in the 1950s, simplified Chinese characters were implemented in China. The new generations in China cannot understand classical Chinese, nor can they read or write the traditional form of the Chinese characters. It is an extremely saddening fact that the cultural treasures passed down by our ancestors are being buried in front of our eyes. We sincerely hope that classical Chinese and the traditional forms of the Chinese characters, the Complete Library of the Four Branches of Literature, and the Abridged Version of the Complete Library of the Four Branches of Literature can be registered in the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection List. Furthermore, we wish UNESCO could promote the global study of classical Chinese and Chinese traditional culture.

Learning Classic Chinese is not difficult. I have met students of Sinology in the U.S. and the UK. Some had a good command of it in three years. Having grasped classical Chinese, one would hold the key to the Complete Library of the Four Branches of Literature and easily tap into 5000 years of wisdom and experiences as if they were one's own. What opulent wealth! Through the learning of traditional Chinese culture, one could become a wise

**Many Cultures,
Many Faiths,
One Australia**



person, an able person, and even a saint or sage, and one could contribute greatly to the long lasting peace and stability of our world.

VI. A Suggestion on a Model Country of Peace and Harmony

1. The Significance and The Methods

The success in the model town of peace and harmony in Tangchi, China, and the ongoing progress of making Toowoomba, Australia a model city of peace greatly boosted our confidence in "Building a Society of Peace and Harmony With the Teaching of Saints and Sages." The next phase of the experiment is to spread the idea and start building a country of peace and harmony. From the success of one

country, the whole world could be on the same path towards a world of peace and harmony. We strongly believe, "Heaven will surely bless those who hold benevolent wishes." If the leader of a country is determined to build his country this way, holding firm to the principles and methods of "Education is the priority in establishing a country and leading its people," they would certainly generate good results even in a short period of time.

The use of technology such as the Internet and satellite TV would be great assets for educating all people. Should a country engage a dozen virtuous and knowledgeable teachers, and have their teachings broadcasted daily through national TV and media to all people, then within one year, social stability would be achieved; and in three years, a peaceful and harmonious society would be a reality.

Currently, leaders in Malaysia and Sri Lanka have shown genuine interests in the idea and methods of establishing a model country of peace and harmony. Malaysia is a multi-religious country with Islam being the predominant faith. Sri Lanka is also a multi-religious country, with Buddhism as the majority faith. Leaders in both countries, Mr. Najib and President Mr. Rajapaksa, respectively, are faithful religious devotees. Acting as role models themselves, they are urging their own people to learn and practice religious teachings.

In November 2011, at the invitation of President Rajapaksa, I was very honoured to pay a visit to the presidential hall and exchanged ideas with him and his

ministers. We also visited ancient sites at various places in Sri Lanka. The president's wisdom and compassion, and the kindness and friendliness of the Sri Lankan people left the delegation feeling deeply touched. We were also overwhelmed to learn that free education is provided to everyone in Sri Lanka, and students receive religious education on weekends in the temples. Also, Dharma masters give talks on TV that are broadcasted nationwide to all people. President Rajapaksa has expressed his wish to build a Sacred Buddhist City of Education and Culture. He also wishes to turn Sri Lanka into the world's first model religious country of peace and harmony. No one can estimate the benefit such a deed will bring to our world.

In March 2013, Mr. Najib invited me

to give Dharma talks in Malaysia for one month. President Rajapaksa also invited me to give Dharma talks in Sri Lanka in July for one month. These two leaders are truly implementing the teaching of "education is the priority in establishing a country and leading its people." No doubt these are the heralding deeds in the establishment of a model country of peace and harmony. Under the leadership of wise national leaders, we envisage that the model country of peace and harmony will be a success in the near future.

2. International Multi-faith University

I have proposed several times in UNESCO conferences, that based on the success stories in Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Australia, we should lead our cause to a higher level. A Multifaith



▲ Images of Imperial Compilation of Books on the Principles of Governing

University should be established, either initiated by the UN or a country, for the purpose of training religious educators for each religion to carry on the sacred education. The university would facilitate effective modern technology using long-distance education like Internet streaming and satellite TV to broadcast the teachings globally to all people.

A Religion and Faith Research school or center could be set up initially to train religious educators. Once the educators are adequately trained, an International Multifaith University can then be established, providing education on subjects such as morality, virtues, causality, philosophy, and science to nurture and train senior educators and administrators for each religion. Each religion will have its

own college, and each should have common as well as their own speciality subjects. Students would need to first build-up a foundation in the areas of morality, virtues, and causality, which are the common subjects for all. Then, they can specialize in the sacred texts of their own religions and faiths. When the students meet the set requirements, they would become proper educators for their respective religions and would start teaching to the worldwide audience over the Internet and satellite TV channels.

These educators-to-be must have the attitude of sincerity and respect to "learn to be a teacher and act as a role model for all people." They must apply the teachings of the saints and sages at work and in their daily lives. Apart from learning their own



religious texts, they need to humbly study the contents of other religions. This will help the teachers pass on the message to teach their own adherents to treat other religious adherents with equality and harmony in the future. Together all will mutually respect and cooperate with one another to uphold peace and harmony for society.

I have mentioned this idea to President Rajapaksa and he showed keen interest and proposed to have the International Multifaith University established in Sri Lanka. We are confident that it will be fruitful.

In summary, I deeply wish that UNESCO would contribute more effort in the above-mentioned issues in coordinating its member states to work together for unity among religions in the learning of religious education and the study of traditional cultures of all humankind. This will enable the flower of sacred education from the saints and sages to blossom everywhere on earth so that proper teachings will prevail, evil will be vanished, and our society and our world will witness true peace, harmony, and stability.

The above are my personal thoughts. I wish you would give them some consideration, and I look forward to hearing your comments.

Best wishes to all.

May auspiciousness be with you all, and may peace be with us all.

Chin Kung AM

Honorary Doctor, Syarif Hidayatullah

State Islamic University in Indonesia

President, Pure Land Learning College Association, Inc., Australia

President, Hong Kong Buddhist Education Foundation, Ltd.

Honorary Professor, University of Queensland, Australia

Honorary Professor, Griffith University, Australia

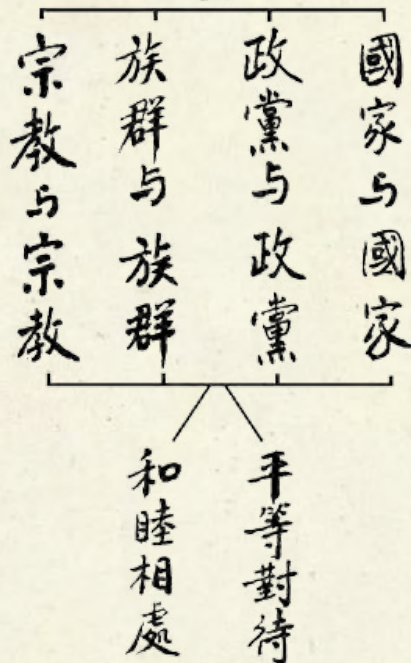
Guest Professor, Renmin University of China

Member of the School Board and Professor,

Shandong University, China



社會安定
世界和平
須要



此四者皆不易達成非常棘手
然由宗教團結下手較易宗教
若能團結合作肯定影響前三
者則世界安定和諧可以落實

淨空時年八十



In order to achieve social stability and world peace,
there must be impartiality and harmonious living among nations,
among political factions, among ethnic groups, and among religions.

It is not easy to accomplish this. In fact, it is extremely difficult.
But when we begin by focusing on religious cooperation it will be easier.

If religions can come together and cooperate with one another,
then this is bound to influence nations, political factions, and ethnic groups.

In this way, world peace and harmony will be realized.

Chin Kung, at the age of eighty

你要盡心盡力愛主上帝要愛人如己這就是我對
你們的要求彼此相愛

基督教

釋淨空



愛是含忍慈祥不嫉妒不誇張
不自大不動怒忍耐凡事包容

天主教 格林多前書

釋淨空



讓彼此敵視的人重歸和好的行為比忠誠慈愛禱
告更好

伊斯蘭教

釋淨空



以智慧為母以知足為父以真誠為兄弟
他們都是你的好親人

錫克教 錫克聖典

釋淨空



稍有一些就要心滿意足要擺脫一切
過度的欲望

巴哈伊教 巴哈安拉作品集粹

釋淨空



He should be content with little, and be free from allinordinate desire.

-Gleanings From the Writings of Bahá'ulláh CXXV (US Bahá'í. Publishing Trust 1990 pocket-size edition)

Make wisdom by mother, contentment thy father, and thruthfulness thy brother. These are thine good relations.

-Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Page 151 (Gems of Thoughts from Guru Nanak, by Harbhajan Singh, Principal of the Shahid Sikh Missionary College, Amritsar;cited by Sardar V. Harcharan Singh, Deputy President Khalsa Diwan Malaysia)

Helping the enemies regain friendship for this is better than saying a faithful pray.

Islam

Love is always patient; love is always kind; love is never envious or arrogant with pride.... or ever get annoyed... She bears up under everything....there is no limit to her hope.

-1 Corinthians 13:4~7, The Bible (International Standard Version, 2008)

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

Christianity

高貴的心靈是把自己奉獻給促進他人平靜快樂
即使這些人曾傷害他

印度教

釋淨空



智慧強過人間任何一種財富

秋教 智慧之靈難說

釋淨空



一個人所能做的最美好事情就是原諒他人
的過錯

猶太教 釋淨空



慈愛萬物實踐美德利益眾生他就是最
快樂的人

佛教 釋淨空



江海所以能為百谷王者以其善下之故能
為百谷王是以聖人欲上民以其言下之欲
先民以其身後之

道教

道德經六十六

釋淨空



Therefore, desiring to rule over the people. One must in one's words humble oneself before them; And, desiring to lead the people, One must, in one's person, follow behind them.

-Tao Te Ching, Chapter 66
(Transl. by D.C.Lau,
Penguin, 1963)

A person who loves all beings, practices virtuous conducts, and benefits all beings is the happiest person.

Buddhism

The most wonderful thing that one can do is to forgive others for their faults.

Judaism

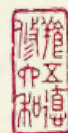
Wisdom is better than wealth of every kind which is in the world.

-Menog-i Khirad
47:6 (Transl. by
E.W.West,
from Sacred Books
of the East, volume
24, Oxford University
Press, 1880)

With a noble soul, one devotes himself to bringing happiness and peace to others, including those who once hurt him.

Hinduism

自天子以至於庶
人一切以脩身為本
宇清國安家和人樂
一切以教學為先



Education is foremost in establishing a peaceful country and
a harmonious family. Everyone,
from the ruler to common people,
must regard cultivation of oneself as most essential.



Appendix :

**A Harmonious Society, a Homeland of Propriety
and Integrity** — *Lujiang Centre of Cultural Education (LCCE)*

**An interview with Master Chin Kung on TV2 Malaysia
program: “What Say You: Can ancient wisdom save
current society?”**

- **The Complete Library of the Four Branches of Literature**
- **Selections from the Four Branches of Literature**
- **Imperial Compilation of Books on the Principles of Governing**
- **Compilation of Chinese Literature on Cultivation**

Let Love and Compassion Prevail the Universe
— *A brief Introduction to Venerable Master Chin Kung’s Thoughts*

A Harmonious Society, a Homeland of Propriety and Integrity

— Lujiang Centre of Cultural Education (LCCE)

I. THE ORIGIN (The Casual Condition that gave rise to the LCCE)

The universe was originally harmonious; everything comes from the same primordial source (elements) and lives symbiotically. To live and thrive together and to maintain harmony, peace, stability, and prosperity of the world, is the most sincere aspiration and expectation of the entire human race.

When we quietly contemplate the history of the east and the west, from ancient times to the present, we find that military retaliations (*armed vendettas*), wars, economic reforms, political alliances, and even world summits cannot reconcile the conflicts caused by bias or polarized views.



Dr. Arnold Toynbee, the famous British historian and philosopher of the 20th century, stated in the 1970s that “[I]n the coming 21st century, the only human civilization fit to liberate the world from the pit of global chaos or a crisis is the Theosophy or Wisdom of Confucianism and Mahayana Buddhism.” Mr. Helmut Schmidt, the former Chancellor of West Germany, also proclaimed that historically, countries ruled by the Chinese (Han people), no matter how powerful, rarely conquered their enemies or expanded their territory through armed force.

Chinese culture is expansive and profound, its philosophy is to tolerate and embrace all differences so that all can flourish together. The essential doctrines of Confucius, Mencius and Mahayana Buddhism all acknowledge “the innate kindness of human nature.” They all teach and transform people through benevolence, compassion, and universal love; (in order to) invoke innate kindness, the purest of purity, the compassion and tranquility, and the benevolence and humility of mankind.

A harmonious world begins with the inner harmony of our minds. Only by re-

solving our inner conflicts and by treating every person, matter, and object with sincerity and love, can external conflicts and confrontations be reconciled, and peace and stability [of the world] achieved. When human minds are pure, the land will be pure. When human minds are peaceful, all sentient beings will be secure. When human minds are equal, the world will have equality.

This is the essence of traditional Chinese education, as well as the fundamental teachings of all worldly saints and sages.

According to the experiences of five thousand years of Chinese history, “education is the first priority in establishing a country and leading her people.” The most effective and efficient way to achieve “the security of the state and the stability of the nation” is through schools, courses, lectures, etc., to promote the education of love and ethics.

The education of sincerity and love, propagated by the saints and sages, transcending time and space, eternal and constant, will truly bring everlasting harmony, peace, security, and prosperity to the entire human race.



II. THE PROFILE OF VENERABLE PROFESSOR CHIN KUNG, THE PRINCIPAL TEACHER OF LCCE

Venerable Master Chin Kung, the Principal Teacher of LCCE (Honorary Professors at Griffith University, and the University of Queensland, Australia; Honorary Doctorates of Griffith University, University of Southern Queensland, Australia, and Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, Indonesia), regards the restoration of the ethical teachings of the saints and sages and the propagation of the compassionate and loving spirit of Mahayana Buddhism as his duty. He has been giving lectures for more than fifty years without a day off. As a social educator, he has dedicated his whole life to world peace, religious unification, and a society of benevolence, love, and harmony.

The Venerable Professor has been invited to give speeches at numerous Peace Conferences organized by UNESCO. During one conference, he proposed “Reconciling Conflicts and Promoting Social Stability and World Peace through Teaching [Morals and Ethical Relations].” His concept was given great recognition and laudation but the attendees felt that it was a utopia and could not be realized.

To help increase people’s confidence and to actualize peace and harmony, the Venerable Professor established the Lujiang Centre of Cultural Education in his hometown, Tangchi, Lujiang County, Anhui Province, China, and the ancient Chinese educational system of classical teachings was adopted as an experiment.

III. THE BLUEPRINT OF THE LCCE

The Lujiang Centre of Cultural Education (LCCE) uses Confucian Classics as teaching materials to train its teachers to be virtuous and to become role models of morality. It gives courses on ethical relations to the locals and holds seminars on “How to Lead a Happy Life” to teach people all over the world.

After two years of learning and practicing, the social values of Tangchi improved tremendously. The experiment validated Confucian doctrine (teaching) that “primordially, human nature was innately kind.” People can be taught to be virtuous. The ancient, traditional cultural education is greatly effective in transforming modern people.

LCCE Mission: to promote the education of morals and ethical relations, to advance world harmony, peace, and stability.

LCCE Motto: Learn to be a teacher, act to be a role model; self-cultivation is the foundation and education is the first priority.

Teaching Principles: Five thousand years of Chinese civilization and the teachings of saints and sages can be summarized as follows; the affinity (natural love) between father and son, the integrity (propriety and loyalty) between the king and his subjects, the difference (different duties) between the husband and the wife, the order (bonding) between the elder and the younger, and the trust between friends.” Among these five relations, the starting point is the affinity between father and son.” Emanating from this natural love between parent and child, it expands into the sincerity and love towards families, clans, nations, and eventually towards the world and all sentient beings between heaven and earth. These

ethical values must be actualized into daily lives.

The Virtuous Tenets of the LEEC: refers to the ethical education of “filial piety, fraternal love, loyalty, trust, propriety, righteousness, integrity, shamefulness, benevolence, love, harmony, and peace.”

Major Teaching Material: *Di Zi Gui* (*Standards for Being a Good Child and Student*), to lay the foundation of ethics.

Related Teaching Materials: the *Classic of the Tri-word Stanza (San-Zi Jing)*, *The Five Disciplines from the Ancients*, *the Four Classics (Si-Shu)*, *the Stories of the Eight Virtues*, and *the Thirteen Classics*, etc.

The Curriculum: A series of classes on the following topics: *Di Zi Gui* and Modern Life, Traditional Culture and the Eight Honors and Eight Shames, Chinese Culture and the Science of Management, the way to be a good teacher (Teaching Methodology), Conducts of Saints and Sages, social man-

ners and etiquette, Healthy Eating Habits in the New Century, etc.

Training of Traditional Arts and Crafts: calligraphy, seal-carving, the martial art of Tai-Chi, music, needlework, the art of paper cutting, etc.

Teaching Media: all kinds of classes, lectures, seminars, and internet classes for long-distance students.

IV. MAJOR TEACHING ACTIVITIES AND EFFECTS

(1) Lecture Series on How to Create a Model City of Peace and Harmony

1. Emphasize “practice” in the training of teachers

To train those who aspire “to propagate the forgotten teachings of the past saints; to establish world peace for all future generations.” Teachers, aspiring to be saints and sages, should correct their mindset and be-

► Studying *Di Zi Gui* (Guidelines for being a good person) attentively together





haviors first and emulate the saints, such as Confucius and Mencius, in their daily activities. They should acknowledge their faults and reduce their wrongdoings. With sincerity and the correctness of minds, they would understand the nuance of Confucius' statement: "How joyous to learn and to constantly review and practice what I have learned!"

2. Teach ethics to villagers

The teachers visited the surrounding villages of Tangchi and gave lessons on ethics to the local farmers and villagers. They exemplified the family tradition of filial piety and fraternal love, the mutual respect between couples, and the cordial relationship between daughter-in-law and mother-in-law. As a result, the children learned to be pious, the elderly were taken care of, and the neighborhoods and communities demonstrated the propriety of yielding when

conflicts arise. Overall, family relations become harmonious and social values of the small ancient town of Tangchi gradually changed for the better.

3. Respect the elderly, venerate the sagacious, and instill virtuous social values

Every year the LCCE presented gifts of dragon-headed canes and money in red envelopes, an old custom, to show respect to the elderly residents of Tangchi. The teachers will visit the elderly in every house; their actions of love and respect for the old aroused the filial piety of the villagers and instigated the social mores of filial piety and fraternal love.

4. Nurture the roots of a harmonious society through the town's community school

Collaborating with the community

school sponsored by the locals, as a base for traditional cultural education, the LCCE opened a series of courses on *Di Zi Gui* and classes on traditional arts and crafts. In addition, it also set up the Happy Seniors Club and *Di Zi Gui* Classes for Families with Youngsters. The goal of LCCE is to actualize the vision of the saints that “the elderly are taken care of, friends are bonded by trust, and the young are nurtured with love.”

5. Songs and laughter at the Green Classroom

The LCCE set up an outdoor green classroom in the wooded park area beside the river of Tangchi. In the great outdoors, lectures on *Di Zi Gui* (Standards for Being a Good Child and Student) were broadcast on TV. Teachers also shared stories of good people and good things happening in the surrounding area as well as lessons of spirit-lifting songs that narrated filial and fraternal love. Quite often the audience was so touched by the sentiment of the songs and stories, which were close to their heart

and experience, they would cry. Because the green classroom promotes healthy recreational activities, they are most popular and welcomed by the local residents.

6. Tea parties to promote community harmony

The LCCE collaborates with the town government to organize yearly events that will coincide with festive seasons or tea parties to discuss specific topics in order to promote the interactions among townspeople, to understand local needs, and to listen to their recommendations. Attendees of such theme tea parties include representatives of taxi drivers, environmental workers, businesses, model villages, and the communications industry.

7. Act as a model for the traditional way of farming

To rebuild the confidence of the traditional way of farming and to promote and realize environmentalism, the LCCE cultivated a piece of farmland with traditional methods, without any use of chemical ferti-



lizers or pesticides, and had a great harvest of fruits and vegetables. As a model of organic farming, it demonstrated the harmony and abundance of traditional farming.

8. Honor virtuous conducts to set a new paradigm

The LCCE, collaborating with the town government to set up good examples for society, organized a myriad of activities to reward and honor the virtuous, such as “the Great Assembly to Honor Good Mothers-in-Law and Good Daughters-in-Law,” “the Great Assembly to Honor Great Mothers, Model Workers, and Exemplary Youngsters,” “the Great Assembly to Honor Good Fathers and Good Children,” “the October Chongyang Festival: Respecting the Elderly Evening Celebration,” etc.

9. Pick up rubbish to keep our hometown clean



The teachers from the LCCE practice the motto social harmony begins with me,” and will pick up rubbish on the streets weekly. They clean the environment as well as purify the minds of the town folks. Less and less town folks will litter the streets and the concept of environmentalism is also strengthened in them.

10. Cable TV as a classroom

To fully utilize the role of television as a media for social education, Tangchi Cablevision dedicated a channel to broadcast 24 hours a day “the Happy Life Seminars” and cultural programs, such as movies or operas, related to loyalty, filial piety and justice. The townspeople can receive and immerse in the wisdom of the saints and sages without stepping outside their homes or shops.

11. The wonder of the Happy Life Seminar

Generally, the LCCE holds a monthly seminar on “How to Lead a Happy Life” to people from all over the world. The seminar provides a series of lectures on the application of traditional culture in daily lives and different enterprises. (Because of the visible benefits,) the courses’ feasible, real life implementation of virtuous conducts are widely accepted and supported by the participants.

(2) The Effects of Traditional Teachings outside Tangchi

The philosophy or the spirit of Chinese civilization starts with a person’s self-cultivation, harmony in the family, the well governance of the nation, and ends with world peace. Such spirit can be applied to the daily activities of a myriad of enterprises, and can bring personal happiness, family harmony, national security, and world peace.





1. Traditional culture applied to penitentiary system (reforms prisoners)

The Judiciary Department and Chief of Prisons Division of Hainan Province introduced traditional culture to its penitentiary system. Civil policemen were sent in groups to attend the Happy Life Seminar to learn traditional culture. After they went back, they taught by example, and with sincerity, effectively encouraged the inmates' consciousness to reform. Currently, the traditional education of ethics is comprehensively implemented in the penitentiary system of Hainan Province.

Venerable Professor Chin Kung has said that a person's conduct may be wicked, but there is no wicked person because everyone can be reformed through education. People can be taught to become good.

2. Traditional culture applied to businesses

More and more entrepreneurs have begun to apply the principles of traditional culture to create their company cultures. The top management of a company in Nanjing, after attending the seminar, realized that "superiors should treat their subordinates

with etiquette and subordinates should treat their superiors with loyalty.” To set example for their workers, the Director and the General Manager will stand at the company’s front door and bow to every worker who reports to duty in the morning. Thereafter, all of them will bow to the picture of Confucius first, and then recite *Di Zi Gui* together. They will share stories of the good deeds of their employees, or their learning experiences of *Di Zi Gui* before they start to work.

V. A HARMONIOUS SOCIETY IS NOT DISTANT

The lessons learned from the Tangchi Experiment reaffirmed our sincere belief

that we can “reconcile conflicts, promote social stability, and achieve world peace.” We have deep faith that “people can be taught to become good” and “primordially, human nature is kind.” Every person was innately a good person. As long as the teachings are positive and correct, every one will be happy to accept such education, and social harmony is not far away.

We wish to join hands with all the peace-loving people of the world; collaboratively, to demonstrate and develop the education of virtues, ethical relations, the law of cause and effect, wisdom, and science; and wholeheartedly, to contribute our efforts to the actualization of social harmony and world harmony for the entire human race.



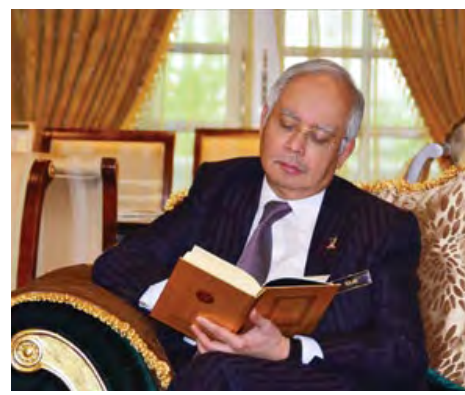
An interview with Master Chin Kung on TV2 Malaysia program: “What Say You: Can ancient wisdom save current society?”

April 19, 2013.

Dear virtuous practitioners and fellow students, the topic for today's talk is: “Can ancient wisdom save current society?” This is a rather serious topic put forward by the hosts of TV2 Malaysia during an interview with me on March 10 (2013). The interview lasted for an hour and I answered several questions. Many sharp questions remained and I thought I would use this time to answer them since they could be beneficial and relevant to us.

The first question: “Ven. Professor, you have visited Malaysia quite frequently. What is your impression of Malaysian society?”





This was an easy question. I have a very good impression of Malaysia. When the Prime Minister asked me: "Why did you choose Malaysia as the place to establish the Academy of Han Studies?" In actual fact, it was a group of traditional culture lovers who hoped to start an Academy of Han Studies here. I supported the idea and tried my best to help them in the hope of making it a success. As for why we chose Malaysia, I would say that first of all, the bond between Malaysia and China is very deep. The east-west passage that connected China with its neighbors was the Silk Road. The sea route however must pass through the Straits of Malacca. Admiral Cheng Ho of China commanded the biggest fleet in the world and made seven voyages to the western ocean. He would repair his ships in Malacca and lived there for a rather long time awaiting the monsoon to set sail for his next destination. No ships could sail without the winds because mechanical help was not available at that time. The biggest of Admiral Cheng Ho's fleets was over 200, while the smallest one had 60 to 70 ships. Such a big crew! The biggest crew came up to about 30,000 people. Therefore, they were the world's strongest navy. It was the Chinese who had discovered the world ahead of the Europeans. However, the Chinese did not occupy or colonize the lands they set foot on. They brought traditional Chinese culture and bequeathed some scientific knowledge and skills to the locals. There was not the slightest harm done to the people. Hence, we can see in Malacca that every street has a big or small Cheng Ho Temple reminiscing a fond memory for the admiral.

Admiral Cheng Ho was himself a Muslim but he was a firm believer of two religions: Islam and Buddhism. His superior,

Emperor Yong Le (the third emperor of the Ming dynasty) was a devout Buddhist. Admiral Cheng Ho contributed to Buddhism, printed the *Tripitaka*, which at that time was an amazing thing to do. He would pay respect to the Buddha and recite sutras, and never failed to do his five-time-a-day Muslim prayer. Speaking of multiculturalism today, Cheng Ho was a typical multicultural leader who achieved great success. He made it possible for different religions, race and ethnic groups to live together harmoniously and be treated fairly and equally.

A third of the Malaysian population is Chinese. This is great because the proportion of Chinese is significant. The Chinese in Malaysia have set up over a thousand Chinese primary schools and they still preserve traditional Chinese culture until today. There are also 62 Chinese secondary schools. If the Academy of Han Studies is successful, it is very likely that it will become a university established by the Chinese. This has long been a dream of the Chinese but the circumstances toward its maturity are still beyond reach. Between the years 2005 and 2006, I went to observe the Han Studies institutes in Europe and the experience compelled me to feel deeply about a Han Studies scholarship that has changed its nature from its original forms. As far as I know, the person who really understood this was the British professor, Arnold Toynbee. He was an expert in the history of world cultures, a very knowledgeable fellow. In the 1970s, he said: "In order to resolve the social problems of the 21st century," he was talking about the social problems of this era, "we must rely on the teachings of Confucius and Mencius and on Mahayana Buddhism." Both are found in China but since the Chinese do not take this to heart, Toynbee's view has aroused no

echo.

Do the Europeans believe in it? I have visited Cambridge University, London University and the Oxford University. I had interactions with their students and discussions with their professors. These students do research in Han Studies and they are the future Han Studies experts in Europe. They used the classic literature of Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism and ancient books as reference materials to write their doctoral theses. We cannot help but admire them. So I asked them: “Do you believe in Prof. Toynbee’s statement?” They smiled but remained silent. Then I asked them another question: “Was Prof. Toynbee wrong in saying so?” They did not reply. And I said: “You are very smart. You neither agree nor disagree. Why didn’t you agree? You were doubtful. Why didn’t you disagree? Prof. Toynbee was too esteemed and you didn’t dare to disagree. Is

my guess correct?” They looked at me and smiled. I said: “If you ask me, I will tell you frankly that Toynbee’s statement is correct. I have complete faith in it. He truly understood traditional Chinese culture and he is a great figure of this era. We can really call him a scholar, an expert.”

If we can abide by what Toynbee said and propagate the teachings of Confucius, Mencius and Mahayana Buddhism, we will be able to resolve all the world’s problems. Countless people have asked me this question and I will give only one answer to speak of: “All problems boil down to one issue—People’s minds have turned evil and society has become chaotic. What should we do? Prof. Toynbee’s solution is to rely on the teachings of Confucius, Mencius and Mahayana Buddhism.” But what is to be found in the teachings of Confucius and Mencius? He did not elaborate further. For



young people doing research in Han Studies, speaking about the teachings of Confucius and Mencius may mean *Si Shu* (Four Books), *Wu Jing* (Five Classics) and the *Shisan Jing* (Thirteen Classics). I asked the students if that was the case and they nodded. "When we speak of Mahayana Buddhism, you think of the *Flower Adornment Sutra*, *Lotus Sutra*, and the *Large Sutra on the Perfection of Wisdom*, these great sutra canons, right?" "Yes," they said. "Can they resolve current problems? You are doubtful that they could." If you ask me, I would be doubtful too. Why? What you see and know are the flowers and fruits of Confucianism, Menciusism and Mahayana Buddhism. They are beautiful but not that practical. Where do these flowers and fruits come from? Flowers come from twigs. Where do twigs come from? Twigs grow from branches. Branches come from the trunk, and the trunk comes from its origin, which is the root. Without roots there will be no flowers or fruits. So where is the root of Confucianism and Menciusism? Where is the root of Mahayana Buddhism? By looking at things from this perspective, we will understand Prof. Toynbee's intentions.

The root that formed Confucius and Mencius's philosophy composed of two words: benevolence and righteousness. Confucius said that as humans we should be benevolent while Mencius said that we must be righteous. How do we put these values into practice? We can practice by being faithful and forgiving. Can the teachings of Confucius and Mencius resolve our current problems? The answer is yes. People nowadays are totally lacking in these values: they are not benevolent, not righteous, not faithful and not forgiving. If we have to engage these four values to educate and transform

people it has to be done not only through the education system but also through our work and the way we socialize. Hence, there is an ancient Chinese saying that goes: "Culture is the soul of a nation, education is the life of a culture." The Chinese attach great importance to education and no matter where they live they will exemplify the wisdom, ideas, methods, experiences and results of education. Through thousands of years, they have accumulated rich resources and preserved them in their entirety in *Siku Quanshu* (The Complete Library of the Four Branches of Literature).

When I was young I was most worried that the *Siku Quanshu* would be destroyed in the mists of war, and that these invaluable classics which our ancestors had taken great pains to leave for us would vanish forever. Every person among the older generation of scholars and experts in Taiwan was concerned about this possibility. So about 30 years ago, the Commercial Press pledged to print the voluminous collection. They knew this would be a money-losing venture but they still felt the need to do so. Why? It was about saving traditional Chinese culture. This book series was too huge and could not be sold. The Commercial Press printed only 300 copies. The World Book Company followed in their footsteps and printed 200 copies of the *Siku Huiyao* (Selections from the Four Branches of Literature). This enabled the series to be preserved, out of the only copy that was left. As for the *Siku Quanshu*, there were only three-and-a-half sets left. One set was incomplete. When these books were compiled during the period of Emperor Qianlong of the Qing dynasty, everything was handwritten with the Chinese brush. Altogether seven copies of the *Siku Quanshu* and two copies of the *Siku Huiyao*

were reproduced. One copy of the *Huiyao* was stored in the palace and another was stored in the Yuan Ming Garden. When Yuan Ming Garden was burnt down by the Eight-Nation Alliance, a copy of each of the *Siku Quanshu* and the *Siku Huiyao* were destroyed, so we were left with only one copy of the *Huiyao*. Now that we have reprinted 200 copies of the *Siku Huiyao* and 100 copies of the *Siku Quanshu*, we can be assured that they will not be lost again in the foreseeable future.

In commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the revolution headed by Dr. Sun Yat-sen, these two book companies intended to reprint the two collections probably at the advice of the Republic of China government. The general managers of both companies came to look for me and I said to them: "This is a good thing. If you give me the old price, I will buy 100 copies of the *Siku Quanshu*, 200 copies of the *Siku Hui-*

yao, 10,000 copies of *Qunshu Zhiyao* (Imperial Compilation of Books on the Principles of Governing) and 10,000 copies of *Guoxue Zhiyao* (Principle Collection of Chinese Classical Literature). These books will be distributed throughout the world so that they will not be lost again." I was the main patron of those book companies.

I saw the prospect of the teachers and principals from Chinese schools in Malaysia. I have had several discussions with them. They are still in their fifties when they retire so they are capable of continuing study and doing research. I said that the Academy of Han Studies has neither teachers nor students. It is an experimental research center. I hope that these teachers and principals can become the researchers at the Academy. The Prime Minister asked whether Malay principals are allowed to join and I said they are most welcome to join. In fact, principals who are keen on promoting the traditional culture of mankind are welcome to join the Academy, regardless of their nationality, race, ethnic group and religion. We provide them with a place to stay, and take care of their daily needs. It is our hope that within ten years they could focus on studying one classic. As to where they could gather their reference materials, I recommend that they start with the *Siku Quanshu*. From the collection one could study anything from the four sectors of literary collection—*Jing* (Confucian Classics), *Shi* (Historical Records), *Zi* (Philosophical Writings of Varied Schools) and *Ji* (Miscellaneous Literature Collections). If you specialize in one classic, you will be an expert in that field. In ten years' time, you will become the world's leading Han Studies expert, a bona fide Han Studies expert and a dedicated Han Studies expert. When the Prime Minister understood this,





he was very happy and full of praise, and he said he wanted to support it. I said: "It is so rare to find someone like you! The significance of this support will go beyond the call of duty of a Prime Minister. It is about saving the traditional culture of mankind and saving all the people in the world. Such merits are great indeed!"

The students at the Academy must spend one to two years on studying archaic Chinese. To be honest, archaic Chinese is the world's greatest invention. It is a tool, a medium carrying the wisdom, ideas, methods, experiences and achievements of the ancient saints and sages in their most original forms. Everything depended on this tool. No other invention is comparable to archaic Chinese. Moreover, learning archaic Chinese is not so difficult. When I was in Europe I asked the students: "You can understand the archaic Chinese texts of Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism and various classics and commentaries. How long did it take you to master the language?" "Three years," they said. When I was in America, I visited the State University of New York. The Chinese Studies students also studied archaic Chinese. One of the students specialized in the *Flower Adornment Sutra* and he read annota-

tions made by Master Qing Liang, and also Elder Li's annotations on the same sutra known as *He Lun* (Combined Discussion). I asked him how long he had spent on learning the language. He said three years. So it is not difficult. Foreigners who do not have any basics in Chinese can learn to read the archaic Chinese successfully in three years. A Chinese will need at most two years.

But why do people find learning archaic Chinese so difficult? The difficulty arose because people do not believe that they can master the archaic Chinese literary form. I have collected over 40 types of sample essays written by primary school students aged eight to eleven during the beginning of the Republic. These essays would be shown especially to the Chinese language teachers in the hope that they can boost the confidence of the teachers. From there the teachers may understand that mastering the archaic Chinese literary form is actually not that difficult. Moreover, anyone in the world can master it. What we need now is a group of archaic Chinese teachers. Hence, the goal of the Academy of Han Studies is to train specialists who are researchers. We hope that these researchers can also conduct archaic Chinese class two to three times a week.

Malaysia has made the biggest contribution to the traditional culture of mankind. I told the Prime Minister: "By doing this great deed, Malaysia can save the world. No matter how many severe disasters on earth, Malaysia will be free from these disasters because the ancestors and the gods of every religion will protect you. Disasters will not befall you." The Prime Minister told me he believes in it, and he is truly working hard on it.

The second question is about the



current social situation in Malaysia. This might also be the problem faced by other countries, which is: “There is advancement in society, development in science and technology, and the nation is becoming wealthy and strong, but the price paid for this advancement is the loss of morality, ethics and happiness. How can we correct this situation?”

This problem is like what you said, an issue faced by other countries. When you say society is more advanced, there is a problem with this statement. It is all right to say science and technology is more developed, but as to people are becoming wealthy and strong, this statement is problematic. Surely people are becoming wealthier, but they have not become stronger. The highest price paid is one’s happiness. People are miserable. They have no happiness. They may be wealthy but they are unhappy; they may enjoy a high status but they are unhappy; they may hold high posts in the government but they are unhappy; they may be incredibly

rich and yet they are unhappy.

How do we remedy this situation? The Chinese ancestors have laid out a solution several thousand years ago, one that Toynbee praised and admired. The ancients said: “Education is essential in building a country and in guiding its people.” The problems that are happening in the world today can be attributed to an education system that has failed to deliver what is truly beneficial to mankind. People have become immoral because our society has forsaken moral and ethical education. Relationship between humans is badly managed because our education system does not teach the art of human relationships (*lun li*). *Lun Li* teaches human relations while moral and ethics teach humans to abide by the law of nature to achieve happiness. If we go against the law of nature, we will face disasters. The development in science and technology today has shown man’s capacity to destroy nature and bring many disasters, such as floods, droughts, and even earthquakes. These disasters are not natural; they are man-made. We have an education of science and technology but there is no education of humanity, one that teaches us how to act like humans. Scientific and technological education is like the leaves and the branches of a tree, whereas humanity education—learning about relationships, moral and ethics is the root. Today we do not want the root and merely focus on the leaves and branches. This is like growing flowers in a vase or potting plants in a bonsai; they can never grow big and strong, and they can never be of great use. We have to understand this.

Everyone is living in misery. I often tell people that I am the happiest person in the world. I have to thank my teacher because he gave me this happiness. My teacher said

to me: "Sakyamuni Buddha is the greatest philosopher in the world. Buddhist philosophy is the pinnacle of all the philosophies in the world, and studying Buddhism is the greatest enjoyment in life." So I began studying Buddhism. After I became a monk, I went to visit my teacher and he said: "Why, you are serious about Buddhism!" "Yes, it is the greatest enjoyment in life so of course I want to enjoy it." Is it the greatest enjoyment in life? Yes, it is. I live in happiness every single day. I have no anxieties, worries, or vexations. I do not desire anything. With desires, I will get worried.

I do not own a house. When I was in Taiwan years ago, I had already begun giving Dharma talks in other countries. Mr. Jian Feng Wen from Taipei was an architect. He constructed a multi-storied building on Hangzhou Nan Road and he wanted to donate one floor to me. I thought he was just joking but when I flew in from America he came to the airport and passed me all the official papers. I frowned when I saw the papers. I asked him: "Do you really want to give the property to me?" He said yes. I said: "Are you trying to give me troubles?" He said that was not his intention. He definitely did not want to give me troubles. I asked him if this building would incur any expenses. He said of course it would. I said: "Then I have to raise funds to pay for the expenses, so aren't you giving me troubles?" He was shocked. "What should we do?" he asked. I said: "How much would the monthly expenses be?" He estimated that it would cost 60,000 NTD. That was not a small amount so I asked him how I could get this 60,000. I said: "If you give me 60,000 every month, I will take it. Otherwise, I will leave it." So he really gave me the money, month by month, for three years. After three

years, many people gave donations and we could maintain the prayer hall by ourselves. So I told him to stop sending us money. You see, I will not be cheated. I will not be deceived.

I lived in Hong Kong for more than ten years. An elderly lady called Madam Chen lived in an apartment built by her son. He left one unit for his mother. Hence, the material used to renovate the interior of this apartment was exceptionally good. Madam Chen "loaned" the apartment to me and I found this approach acceptable. She gave me a key, and all the maintenance costs were her responsibility. The weekly cleaning was also her responsibility. I did not have to bother. This is called the greatest enjoyment in life. If you have to worry about such things in life, how can you get any enjoyment? You will be miserable! I do not get involved in these matters. When I was 85, I moved to this place where I am living now. It belongs to Mr. He Ze Lin. I have known him for more than 30 years. Every time I came to Hong Kong to give Dharma talks, for instance, in 1977 when I gave lectures on the *Surangama Sutra*, he attended all the lectures for four months. He never missed a single lecture. When he passed away a few years ago he told his wife to give me the house. When the house was given to me, there was already water and electricity, and his daughter was responsible for paying the taxes. I did not have to worry about anything. The Hong Kong Buddhist Education Foundation helps me to pay for the provisional expenses and so that will do. If I need to worry about these things, is it not better for me to live in a hut? Some practitioners in Inner Mongolia have given me two Mongolian yurts. I really like them. Living in a yurt is like living in a tent. You can feel totally at

ease.

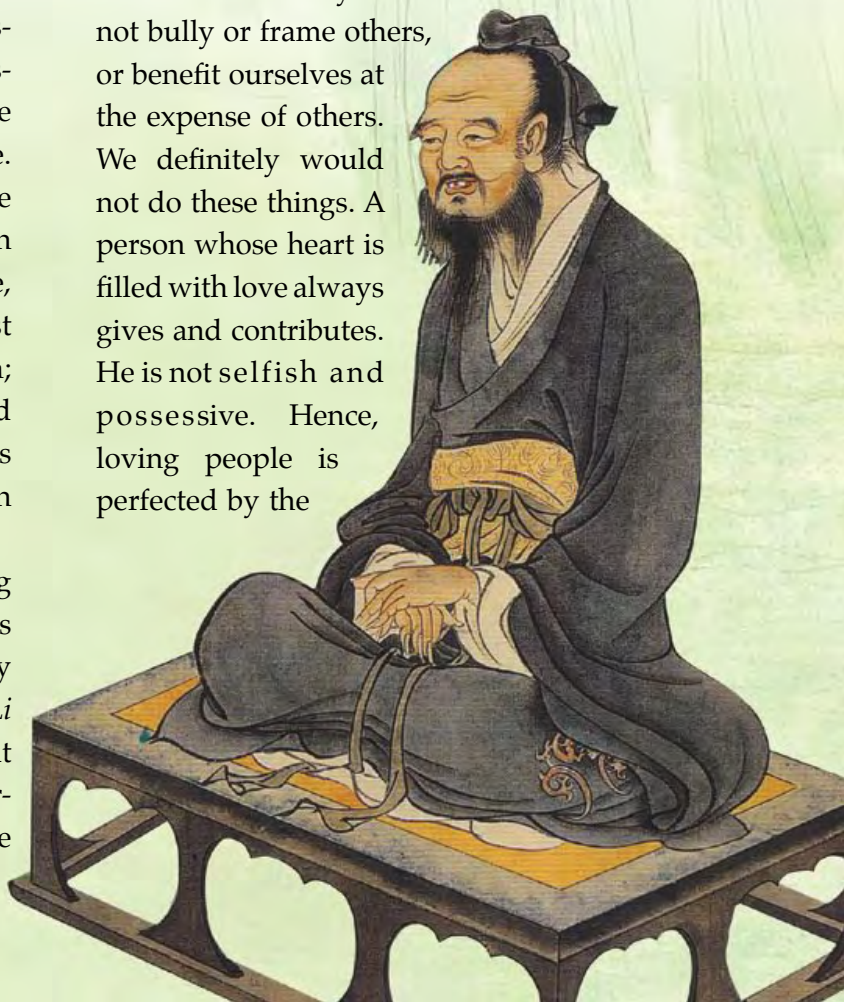
If we want to improve the situation we are in today, we must manage education well. I have discussed this with the Prime Minister quite a bit, and he completely agreed with me. Hence, I believe that in the future, he would show the best example to the country, to the people, and to the whole world. The leader of this country deserves our respect.

The third question: Some people may not understand what is meant by ancient wisdom. Can Ven. Master please explain it?

Ancient wisdom is already in each and every one of us. Everyone has wisdom. It is natural; it is not taught. In Buddhism, we call it true self-nature; in religion, it is known as God and Spirit. The spirit of God, or, what some called the spirit of the saint, is ancient wisdom. Moreover, everyone is equal. In the *Flower Adornment Sutra*, Sakya-muni Buddha said: "All sentient beings possess the wisdom and virtuous characteristics of the Thus Come One." The Thus Come One is what the Chinese call innate nature. The Chinese say that one's innate nature is originally good. This "good" is not as in "good and evil". "Good" is a word of praise, it is ultimate goodness without the slightest flaws. What is goodness? First it is wisdom; second it is virtue, and third it is of dignified physical characteristics. These three aspects encompass everything; all are manifestation of the ultimate goodness.

In *Li Ji* (Record of Rites), written during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Period, it is stated that humans are innately good. The Great Learning is a chapter in *Li Ji* and it stated that: "The essence of great learning is to manifest one's illustrious virtue and to love people. It stops at ultimate

goodness." This statement describes the innate nature. It is the same as what Toynbee had said but without detailed explanation. Sakya-muni Buddha filled the gap and expounded this idea further in the *Flower Adornment Sutra*. This maxim is the title and aim of the *Flower Adornment Sutra*. One's illustrious virtue is the true self-nature that is originally good; this is what Buddha called the wisdom of the Thus Come One. The wisdom of the Thus Come One is our innate nature. The book of *Great Learning* talks about illustrious virtue. When one's virtue is manifested, then he is a saint. In Buddhism, the absence of virtues makes one a layperson. With its manifestation, we are Buddhas or Bodhisattvas. Our illustrious virtue can be shown through loving people and all sentient beings. By loving others, we definitely would not harm others. Love is sacrificing oneself for others, and we definitely would not bully or frame others, or benefit ourselves at the expense of others. We definitely would not do these things. A person whose heart is filled with love always gives and contributes. He is not selfish and possessive. Hence, loving people is perfected by the



last phrase: “It stops at ultimate goodness.” We must conduct ourselves to the point where this is achieved.

There is a United Nation (UN) event next month (May 2013), at which I will be giving two talks, one for 20 minutes and the other for one and a half hours. My 20-minute speech is about this word “love”—endearing love. What is ancient wisdom? It is endearing love, something that need not be taught. Love is the first virtue of our innate nature, and the ancient Chinese called it endearing love, *Qin Ai* 親愛. The Chinese prefer simplicity, so they merely use one word: *Qin* 親, to encompass endearing love. In the Five Human Relationships, the most fundamental relationship is built upon the love between parents and children, and it is from here that traditional Chinese culture is founded. The love between parents and children existed thousands of years ago and it remained until today. You can see its expression all the time but when you are lost you turn a blind eye to it. I attended a UN-led Peace Conference in Okayama, Japan, representing University of Queensland and Griffith University to participate in this event. I stayed in Okayama for a week. I had affinity with this place and I really liked it. In the morning after breakfast, I went for a walk with more than ten fellow practitioners accompanying me. One of them was a young mother pushing her baby in a stroller. Halfway through the walk, I asked everyone to stop. I said: “Come and see the love between parents and children. Look at this four-month-old child. He cannot speak but look at his eyes and his movements toward his mother, and toward other people.” At that time I called it “the 100 days of one’s life,” the first 100 days of our life, a period when “the truthfulness of our innate nature

is revealed.” That is mankind’s true innate nature. The first virtue of our innate nature is love, and in this love, there are no arising thoughts, no discrimination, no attachment, because the child has not learned about discrimination and attachment. Only this is real love. With discrimination and attachment, the quality of love changes. If you observe it closely, you can see that the basis of Chinese culture originates from here.

We can see it, and our ancestors from thousands of years ago could see it, and they must have thought about how this true love were to be preserved until a person turned 80, 90, or even 100 years old. How did a child change? As he grows up without being taught, he becomes a good person if he mixes with good company, and bad if he mixes with bad company. In my generation, those who followed hunters became hunters and those who followed farmers became farmers. Farmers are kind but hunters are cruel. One’s innate nature changes to the worse. Hence, we understand that “people’s innate nature is the same, but their habits set them apart. If they are not taught, their innate nature will deteriorate.” Hence, education



is the most important link to the traditional Chinese culture. We need to teach children the most important lessons in life. But what method should we engage to achieve this goal? “The right way of teaching is done through focused training.” For thousands of years, the first eight verses in *Sanzi Jing* (Three Character Classic) embody the highest guiding principles and directives of ancient Chinese education. This is the reflection of a truly good teacher, someone who will let you know the objective of education right from the beginning, in the hope that you can become a sage in the future. In a similar manner, Buddhist Dharma begins its teachings by saying that all sentient beings are originally Buddhas (enlightened beings), so that you can be confident that you are originally a Buddha and you can become a Buddha. You can rest assured of this. The Chinese also say that you are originally a good person because human nature is innately good. Therefore, what the Chinese ancestors have seen and thought about was exactly the same as what was found in Buddhism, and this allowed the Chinese to embrace Buddhism wholeheartedly when it was spread to China. Prof Toynbee asserted that Buddhism had raised traditional Chinese culture to a higher ground. It explained the Chinese culture in great details and enabled Confucianism and Daoism to advance in great strides as a result.

This kind of love is also known as benevolent love—treating others as you would treat yourself. I will love others the way I love myself. I love my parents, so I must love others’ parents too. That is what love-oneself actually means. A person who loves himself will never do bad deeds or have evil thoughts. Why? By having evil thoughts is being unfair to oneself. Our innate nature is

so good, so complete, how can we not respect and sustain it? In religious terms, this is the love of deities, the love of God, the love that is sacred and divine. The love between parents and children is the root of all traditional cultures. In China, this primordial relationship gives rise to the Five Human Relationships. Our relationship with all sentient beings is an integrated whole—parents and children love each other, superiors and subordinate are righteous toward each other, and husband and wife play different roles.

When we talk about the different roles played by husband and wife, I excerpted this Confucius quote that describes the respect given to women by the Chinese saints and sages. Indeed Chinese scholars were very respectful toward women. They used the term *Bie* 别, means differences, to denote the two different duties for husband and wife. The duty of the woman is greater than that of her husband. She is the master; whereas the husband’s responsibility is to provide economic means, in today’s terms this would mean material comforts, for the family. The wife is responsible for the spiritual life of family, and for passing the family rules to the children. This is a woman’s domain. Women can give birth and nurture children thus ensuring the succession to the next generation. This is more important than anything else. Therefore, women have to undertake this responsibility. What we must know is that passing on a heritage is more important than just living out a lifetime. No matter how hard we have to work on earning a living we must consider this as our foremost duty. Hence, a wife must be respected. She is the bearer of the future generation. The passing on of our ancestors’ legacy from generation to generation is

dependent on women, so how can we neglect them or look down upon them? That is being very unfilial and very disrespectful, comparable to being disrespectful toward one's ancestors and being unfilial toward one's parents. Whether a family can produce virtuous and capable people is totally dependent on the wife. If a wife knows how to educate her children, her family will certainly produce saints and sages.

Everybody can become a saint or a sage. Everybody has the same nature, just like what the Buddha had said: "All sentient beings are originally Buddhas," absolutely fair and equal in their nature. As to whether one can become a Buddha, it all depends on how you handle the circumstances in your personal life. If you come across the Pure Land School you will learn to believe that everybody can become a Buddha. What is the philosophy of the Pure Land School? Buddha stated in the *Sutra of Visualization of the Buddha of Infinite Life* that "This mind is the mind of a Buddha, and this mind wants to become a Buddha". What is a Buddha? Buddha is your true heart. Your true heart is Buddha. It is fair and equal in every way. So today, if you want to become a Buddha, you can become a Buddha because you are originally a Buddha. As the Chinese said: "You are originally a saint, so becoming a saint is something that you can definitely achieve." The view that speaks of Confucius being a saint was raised during the Han dynasty. He was the embodiment of a gentle, kind, respectful, thrifty individual akin to forbearance. Confucius exemplified these values in his life, his work, and the way he handle people. Parallel to these values are the Five Constants. They are benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and trustworthiness. Benevolent people will love others.

When they think of themselves, they will think of others, and they often think more of others and think less of themselves. When others are fine, I will be fine too. How can I not be fine? When others are not well, it is not possible for me to be well. This has its reasoning. The absence of such education in the Five Human Relationships, the Five Constants, the Four Anchors and the Eight Virtues, is the primary cause of our social problems today.

In recent years, education has walked down two paths. Before the Republic was established, Chinese education centered on moral and ethics. After the demise of the Qing dynasty and the establishment of the Republic of China, education ideas became westernized. People started to doubt their tradition, their ancestors and their parents. Science promotes doubts. So children at kindergartens are taught to doubt and question, and not to believe in others. This is very problematic indeed!

Ten years ago when I was in Australia in 2002, one year after the 911 terrorist



attacks, the Chancellor of University of Queensland sent two professors to come and see me. They invited me to hold a talk with the professors at the university's Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies. Students there were working on doctorate and master's degrees. When they graduate, most of them will work at the UN to resolve international conflicts using what is known today as diplomacy. The main topic for the discussion was about resolving conflicts and bringing peace and stability to the society. I asked them: "What methods do you use to resolve conflicts so that you can achieve peace and stability?" They said: "Using traditional Western ideas: repression and revenge, methods like that." Now repression and revenge have turned into terrorist wars. Not only did they fail to resolve conflicts, they have also exacerbated the situation. They were very worried. They did not want to use this method. Instead, they wanted to use a truly peaceful method.

The gentleman sitting opposite me was a senior professor. He sat next to the Dean. He was an American. I asked him: "Does American education teach the idea of competition in kindergarten, primary school, secondary school, and all the way

to graduate school?" He said yes. I asked: "What will competition lead to?" He was lost, because he had never thought about this issue before. I said: "Competition will escalate into fights, and fights will escalate into war. Today's warfare will involve nuclear and biochemical weapons. It will destroy this planet. This kind of education idea will take us to a dead end." For thousands of years, Chinese education revolved around the value of "forbearance". They taught this principle to the young and the old. Children are naive, so they have to "forbear with tolerance". When they are slightly more mature, they have to "forbear with humility". When they grow up to become adults and enter society, they have to "forbear in accordance to propriety." This is a workable path, the best idea and method that can resolve conflicts and bring forth peace and harmony.

The following week, the Chancellor came to look for me again. So we held another discussion. The university had prepared an appointment letter. They invited me to become a professor, and even gave me an honorary doctorate. I said this is not useful for me. I said I was happy to talk to the teachers and we could do it once a week because it was mutually beneficial. However, the Chancellor insisted that I accept the offer and in the presence of the Chancellor of Griffith University, they both asked me to accept the invitation. I asked them why. He said: "This concept of yours brought us new perspectives and directions and we hope that you can represent our country and the university to participate in the UN Peace Conference." He said UN does not invite monks. The people they invite are Ph.D. holders and university professors. So I accepted the invitation and my ties with the





▲ Confucianism represents benevolence, honor, loyalty and forgiveness. Mahayana Buddhism represents true sincerity, and compassion.

UN came about like that. It was all through chance. If not for the 911 incident, I would not have any ties with these universities or the UN.

Hence, the Five Constants are very important. For thousands of years, ancient Chinese have placed the Five Constants to be the basis of a moral conduct. Constant means something that is eternal and does not change; it is something that transcends space and time. Wherever you are, whichever era you are in, these values can be applied regardless of country, race, ethnic group and religion. When we talk about the Five Constants — benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and trustworthiness — everybody would agree that humans should embrace these values. Benevolence means loving other people. This is the fundamental, the root, the compassion that we must have. If we treat others as ourselves, this is true love. There is no favor or despise, like or dislike, none of that in true love. Everything is equal. This is benevolence. The second value is righteousness. Righteousness means

that our thoughts, speech and conduct must be rational and must go in accordance to reason and the law. The country enacts law. One does not go against the law of a country and the law of nature. And what does reason mean here? It means the Five Constants, and the eight virtues of filial piety, fraternity, loyalty, trustworthiness, benevolence, love, peace and harmony, as well as the Five Human Relationships. We should never go against reason and law. Ancient China had very strict laws. Why? They are meant to deter people from wrongdoings. But when a law has to be enforced after violations were committed, it should be done within reason. There are justifications behind the enactment and enforcement of law. If the laws are not strict, they cannot deter wrongdoings. But when law enforcement is too harsh, we risk losing our humaneness. Law enforcement would opt to reduce a punishment as much as possible until it could not be done because the crime committed was too serious, and that the law enforcers' conscience could rest assured that they had tried their best to reduce the punishment and they had done their duty to take all aspects into consideration, including humanity and moral principles.

Propriety means courtesy or etiquette. There must be propriety in the relationship between humans. Without propriety there will be chaos. From daily activities including wearing clothes and having meals, the family is abide by family propriety. Unfortunately, the notion of observing propriety has disappeared from our lives. Most of the Chinese family propriety is recorded in the genealogy. Family rules are also considered as propriety. The common family rules are collected in *Dizigui* (Guidelines for Being a Good Person). Whichever family one comes

from he basically has to behave in accordance to the 113 rules of conduct. In addition, every family has its own family rules that are different from those of other families. Without propriety society will become chaotic.

In the area of attires, there are ceremonial wear, formal wear and work wear. The Buddhist venerables pay attention to the 25-strip robe; anything above nine is considered ceremonial, and the seven-strip robe is considered formal. The five-strip robe is working clothes, which is the short gown that we are wearing. These clothes are made for the convenience of work. The *Hai Qing* 海青 is a type of formal wear originated from the Han dynasty. The monks and nuns have preserved its style and continued to wear it until now. However, their robes do not have embroideries, unlike those worn by laypeople decorated with embroidered patterns. The pattern and color sewn reflect the social status of the wearer. It is called clothes with a seal and it signifies one's social standing. People cannot wear the wrong clothes. Scholars, farmers, industrial workers, traders and people from all walks of life had their uniforms and formal clothes that they wore on ceremonial occasions. From the clothes one wear, people knew what kind of job you hold and what level of social status you are attached to. Nowadays, we do

not have this, so things become chaotic.

Wisdom means rationality, that is, not doing things based on emotions, be it at work, dealing with people or matters. With emotions come “like” and “dislike”, and this will bring disorder. Hence, we must use wisdom to deal with problems. The last Constant is trustworthiness. Trustworthiness in Chinese means the words spoken by people. What is said must be done. One must keep his promise. These five values are called the Five Constants. Regardless of country, race or religion, these five values are important to us and we cannot overlook any one of these values. They constitute human's basic virtuous conduct and the values do not change over time.

Prime Minister Guan Zhong propounded the Four Anchors—propriety, righteousness, integrity and shamefulness. Guan Zhong was born during the Spring and Autumn Period, earlier than Confucius's time. He became the Prime Minister of the state of Qi and helped Duke Huan, the lord of Qi, to achieve the historical “Nine alliance meetings with the lords and for once unite them all.” This means more than a few international conferences were held and Duke Huan was the chairman; similar to what is happening at the UN. If the state of Qi was governed well, everybody wanted to learn from it. When a country uses the Four Anchors to govern,



this country will become wealthy, powerful and prosperous. Without the Four Anchors, a country will be in grave danger and will possibly be destroyed. Guan Zhong depended on the Four Anchors to govern the country. He accomplished it through education. We know that when Guan Zhong was helping Duke Huan to govern the state of Qi, the core idea embedded in his education policy consisted of those four words. Everybody knew, everybody understood and everybody fulfilled these values, so how could the country not be strong and prosperous?

Later, the Four Anchors expanded to become the Eight Virtues: filial piety, fraternity, loyalty, trustworthiness, benevolence, love, harmony and peace. On the other hand, people from the Republican era would name the eight virtues as: loyalty, filial piety, benevolence, love, trustworthiness, righteousness, harmony and peace. This constitutes the new Eight Virtues. It is not bad, but what the ancients had proposed carries a deeper meaning, especially in terms of filial piety, fraternity, loyalty and trustworthiness. Nevertheless, both versions are good in capturing the core values of China's traditional civilization. Fraternity means respecting the elders, while filial piety is being dutiful to one's parents and treating teachers like one's parents. This is being filial to parents and respectful of teachers in the ancient propriety of China.

The biggest hurdle facing today's educator is that teachers do not find students willing to learn. And where students are willing to learn, no suitable teachers can be found. This is the era we are in. In my generation, there were good teachers. As long as you were willing to learn, the teacher would teach you what you needed to know. I was the lucky one. I met Prof. Fang Dong

Mei in Taiwan. I did not know him and nobody introduced or recommended me to him. I merely knew that he was a fellow townsman from Tong Cheng, a city less than 30km away from my birthplace and that he was a descendant of a Tong Cheng School member. His lineage is traceable to Fang Bao, well known since the Qing dynasty. Being the sixteenth-generation grandchild of Fang Bao, he received excellent schooling at home. My hometown also benefited from its close proximity to Tong Cheng and we became more cultured than people from other regions as a result. When I met Prof. Fang in Taiwan, I was poor and had to support myself by working. I could not afford to go to university but I was desperate for a chance to attend his lectures. He was a philosophy expert, and I was very interested in philosophy. I wrote Prof. Fang a letter and an essay with that hope that he would allow me to attend his lectures. After a week, he wrote back to me and invited me to meet him at his house. We had a long chat and Prof. Fang told me: "In today's school environment, teachers do not act like teachers and students do not act like students. That includes myself. If you want to sit in on my class you will be disappointed." When I heard this, I was very upset and depressed. The teacher had rejected me. We sat there quietly for six to seven minutes, then he said: "Ok, why don't we do it this way. You can come to my house every Sunday and I will teach you for two hours. I will give you a general introduction to philosophy." So my class was conducted in his small living room. It was half the size of our recording studio, with a small round table, one teacher and one student. I did not have to pay him any school fee.

Ten years after that, I kept thinking of

this question: “Why did Prof. Fang teach me personally rather than allowing me to go to university to attend his lectures?” Was it because what he taught at the university was different from what he taught at home? This was in fact, the truth. Students at the university were not interested in his lectures. It was not until I taught in a foreign university that I finally understood the reason. Prof. Fang told me: “Venerable, when you teach, do not speak for more than 15 minutes. Why? Nobody would pay any attention to you as their mind would wander away while you speak.” After he reminded me, I began to take notice, and it was really true. After ten minutes, these students’ eyes began to look outside and they had lost their focus. I asked him what I should do. He said: “Just be perfunctory, tell some jokes and make everyone happy.” I understood this when I went abroad. I finally understood what the students were thinking. When they were in primary and secondary school, these students were very serious with their studies because they had to sit for school entrance exams. When they reached university, they could afford not to focus on their studies and merely waited to get their certificates. Hence, teachers could not teach with any seriousness. Even if they did, the students did not listen. Moreover, students can criticize teachers and if the students do not like a teacher he will lose his job in the next school term. The teacher’s livelihood will be affected because he is dependent on this income. So the teacher will tell stories, talk to the students and then class is over. If there were questions, he would answer them; if there were no questions, he would just leave it like that. I understood that Prof. Fang was in this kind of situation.

The academic studies concerning one’s

mind, or the studies concerning the teachings of the saints and sages can only be successfully done provided we are completely sincere and respectful. Without utmost sincerity and respect, and a certain faith in the sages, you cannot gain any insight into their minds. I guess Prof. Fang surmised that I had a bit of sincerity and respect left in me. Therefore I often said: “If I had met Prof. Fang during the early Republic era, he would not have accepted me and taught me on a one-to-one basis. But since I displayed a bit of respect and sincerity, say around a score of 30 points, a failing score actually; yet compared to students at the university who only had about three points of respect and sincerity, my 30 points were significant enough to let my teacher pay attention to me. If I were to learn from the ancients and I needed a passing mark of 60, I would not have scored enough to pass and be accepted by them as a student.

We must know that all this converges to affinity. We are aware that the profession of teaching is not an easy task, and the wish to revive traditional culture is easier said than done. Both teachers and students of traditional cultures are nowhere to be found. Hence I thought of a way: we neither need teachers nor students. We will



look for researchers. My target is fixed at the Chinese schools in Malaysia. There are over 1,000 teachers and principals from these schools, and there are also 62 Chinese secondary schools. We hope that these teachers could begin learning when they are still teaching at school, and choose one Chinese classic as a lifelong pursuit. I believe they can master archaic Chinese in one year's time since they have been teaching all their lives and they have never been away from books. From the Siku Quanshu, they could choose anything from the four sectors of literature and specialize in one area of studies. After ten years, they will become the world's leading Han Studies expert and we will ask the university to give them a Ph.D. degree. We believe that in ten years' time, more people in the world will undertake Han Studies. Why? It is real knowledge and great wisdom. When you have not come across it, you do not know its benefits. Once you are in touch with it, you will never get tired of studying or teaching it. It is really interesting and captivating, and it is no ordinary knowledge.

You asked me to explain what ancient wisdom is. Everybody possesses ancient wisdom. This wisdom arises from our true self-nature. The ancients managed to attain it. If we are truly enlightened today, what

we have achieved will be exactly the same as what they ancients had achieved. This is very true. Sakyamuni Buddha lived 2,500 years apart from us, and a similar figure emerged in China during the Tang dynasty, one Master Hui Neng of the Zen Buddhist School born about 1,400 years ago. Hui Neng and Buddha were more than 1,000 years apart. Sakyamuni Buddha achieved enlightenment under a Bodhi tree, while Master Hui Neng became enlightened in the abbot's quarter, in the middle of the night, when the abbot told him the general meaning of the *Diamond Sutra*. The level of enlightenment attained by both of them is equivalent. As long as one's mind is clear and enlightened, it is ancient wisdom. It is real wisdom. It is not something we learned; it originally exists in one's true self-nature. The Chinese say that human nature is innately good. Buddhism states that all sentient beings are originally Buddhas, and our mind is the mind of a Buddha. Ancient Chinese wisdom arises when precepts lead to concentration. "By reading a book a thousand time, you will understand its meaning naturally," and "focused on studying one subject for a long period." All these can be considered precepts. Abiding by the precepts is a method. It teaches you to restore your pure mind. When a pure mind is attained, it can be elevated to a state of balance and non-differentiation; and subsequently it is very likely that you will be able to attain enlightenment. As long as you can maintain a pure and balanced mind, you will achieve enlightenment. This is ancient wisdom.

You asked me about the difference between current wisdom and ancient wisdom. Modern people do not have the wisdom that the ancients had. Why? Wisdom arises from a pure mind. When the mind of peo-



ple is not pure, to tell you the truth, what is acquired is only knowledge. Wise people have knowledge, but knowledgeable people do not have wisdom. Why? It is very difficult to let the mind return to a pure and balanced state without any distractions and wandering thoughts. With distractions and wandering thoughts, your mind will be polluted, so it will be impure. When wandering thoughts set in, you will not attain a state of balance. So if you want to awaken the wisdom embedded in your true self-nature, you must restore a pure and balanced mind and believe in this idea without a shadow of doubt.

The ancients would not resort to cheating like modern people would. The ancients truly practiced the Five Constants (benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness) so they could be trusted. Nowadays, people are not benevolent, not righteous; they are ill mannered, not wise, and not trustworthy. We can trust the ancients but we cannot trust our contemporaries. Hence, we should learn from the ancients and adopt the Five Constants to restore confidence in human relationships. These are the virtues of our true self-nature. We must not be afraid of being taken advantage of, or being cheated. If others want to cheat us, let them do so, but I will not do the same to them. I have to restore my benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness. If others treat me without benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and trustworthiness, I can accept it but I will not lower myself to their level. I will walk the path of the ancients. I will walk the path of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. The Buddhas and Bodhisattvas practice the Ten Virtuous Deeds: no killing, no stealing, no sexual misconduct, no lying, no

tale-bearing (stirring up troubles), no flowery speech (using flowery words to cheat others), no harsh and abusive language (rude speech), no greed, no anger and no ignorance. Even if others would not practice the ten virtuous deeds, I would. When you truly practice these values, you will realize that you become very happy, and you can then understand what Prof. Fang meant by "it is the greatest enjoyment in life." As long as you put these into practice, from every arising thought to every word you speak and everything you do, you will find happiness! You will be happy to meet everyone. You will love the person who lied to you. You will also love the person who wanted to get rid of you, framed you and gave you troubles. You will love them without any trace of resentment.

We will achieve different ends in the future. I want to end up at the Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss and people there welcome someone like me. If people are kind to me, I am grateful. This is how it should be. If others are unkind to me and I bear grudges against them, I will not be able to go to the Pure Land. There are no resentful people in the Pure Land. In the Land of Ultimate Bliss all harms done are forgiven. Why did these people slander me, become jealous of me and try to make life difficult for me? They do not understand me because they have no contact with me. If they know me, they will understand and stop slandering me. In all our arising thoughts and our actions, we do everything for their benefit, without incurring any harm to them. The moral conduct that the ancients taught is virtuous and indispensable. If we have the ability, the energy, and the time to follow in their footsteps, why don't we do so? This is something that we should know.

People nowadays treat knowledge as wisdom. That is incorrect. Knowledge and wisdom are two separate things. Knowledge is something we acquired, whereas wisdom arises from self-enlightenment. I never looked at the questions you raised before I answered them. This is my habit. When you ask, I give you the answer. Wisdom comes from holding precepts, precepts engender concentration, and concentration engenders the arising of wisdom. Knowledge can be earned without abiding by the precepts, nor does it need concentration. One can become knowledgeable and well informed. However, knowledge can only solve limited problems. It is not limitless. Moreover, it brings side effects. Wisdom has no side effects, no limits. It is perfect and has no hindrances. We must be clear about this. Hence, the ancient Chinese spoke of attaining meditative concentration because it will give rise to wisdom.

The Chinese taught their children to memorize ancient classics. Nowadays, many people are against this idea. They say that children know nothing, so what is the point of asking them to memorize classics? This is erroneous. Without this kind of training, the children will have a lot of wandering thoughts. If you ask them to memorize and recite ancient classics over and over again, they will have little time left for wandering thoughts. This is a way of seizing their wandering thoughts so that they can focus their minds. That is the real purpose. It is not about asking them to remember the classics; that is subsidiary. If they read a text over and over again, they will be able to memorize it. But that is not the main purpose. The main purpose is to train them to acquire a pure and balanced mind. What an excellent idea! The teachings of the ancient

saints and sages are great. Even if you do not understand the classics, you read them until you are familiar with them. One day when you are enlightened you will understand what they mean. We have to know that this is where Eastern and Western ideas and methods diverge.

If we want to restore the traditional teaching method today, we have to conduct a corresponding experiment first. If the experiment is successful, everybody will believe it and understand what it is all about. Without experimentation, nobody will believe it. Hence, the Malaysian Academy of Han Studies is an experimental school. If it succeeds in ten years, you will acknowledge it and promote it throughout the world. We did a three-year experiment in Tang Chi in the past. Although the school has now been dissolved, its achievements are still widely influential. China is beginning to show faith in traditional Chinese culture and it may be attributed to this experiment. Other countries are also gradually having more confidence in traditional Chinese culture due to the Tang Chi experience. This is something we ought to know.

The fourth question: Current society seems very different from ancient society, so people are doubtful whether ancient wisdom can still be applied to current society.

It is still applicable. Prof. Toynbee said it. Not only will ancient wisdom be applicable but it can also resolve some negative problems in today's society. If we can preserve the good values and resolve the negative elements, ancient wisdom would prove to be truly valuable. We have to completely rely on experimentation because without conducting an experiment these doubts and worries cannot be stopped, and if doubts



and worries cannot be stopped we will face some truly big obstacles. We have successfully presented a model town and now we are moving on to the second project, which is a model city. The city of Toowoomba in Australia is working on that and it is a success story. I shall give a report on the experiment in Toowoomba in the UN meeting next month. This small town has a population of 100,000 people composed of 80 races and ethnic groups with more than ten religions and 100 languages spoken. It is truly a multicultural city. Although the population is large, the people who live there are like brothers and sisters. They respect each other, show concern for each other, take care of each other, and cooperate with each other, without any show of conflicts or confrontations. Every religion can spread its philosophy and principles, and whoever is interested can attend the talks organized by the different faiths. We also listen to their talks often and we gather their strengths to make up for our weaknesses so that we can improve ourselves. There are many, many benefits!

The fifth question: Current society is very different from ancient society. Many people are doubtful whether ancient wisdom can still be applied to current society.

Ven. Master Chin Kung: The former Prime Minister gave the best answer to this question. (Venerable Master was holding two photos.) This photo shows the Prime

Minister, Dato' Seri Najib, reading the English translation of *Qunshu Zhiyao*360 (The Governing Principles of Ancient China), and the other photo shows the former Prime Minister, Tun Mahathir, reading the same book. Tun told me: "This book records the words of the ancients from thousands of years ago, and yet the principles are still applicable today. This is true wisdom." I felt that Tun Mahathir's words are perfectly correct and they coincide with what Prof. Toynbee had said. According to Prof. Toynbee, "In order to resolve the social problems of the 21st century," a very complicated society at that, "we must rely on the teachings of Confucius and Mencius and on Mahayana Buddhism." The book *Qunshu Zhiyao* was compiled by the decree of Emperor Taizong of the Tang dynasty. He participated in the rebellion movement against the Sui dynasty and managed to overthrow the Sui emperor. Eventually, he conquered all the other rebels and helped to establish the Tang dynasty. Taizong's father became the emperor for nine years and relinquished the throne in favor of him. At that time, Taizong was 27 years old. Emperor Taizong enlisted himself in the army when he was 16, and the task of defeating all the rebels who fought for power was not an easy one. He did not study much as he was a general, and he wondered how he could govern such a big empire populated by so many people. Emperor Taizong remembered the teachings of the saints and sages. He ordered Advisor Wei Zheng to form a small team to look into the various Confucian Classics, Historical Records, and Philosophical Writings of Varied Schools and search for ideas, methods, experiences and effects pertaining to self-cultivation, family management, government and ways to bring peace to the world. He wanted to read all these. Wei Zheng's team spent a

few years and combed through more than ten thousand classics and finally selected 65 types of books. From the 65 books they extracted what Emperor Taizong needed to know about governing and compiled them into a collection known as *Qunshu Zhiyao*. It became an essential read for Emperor Taizong and not only did he read it day and night, he ordered all his government officials to read it as well. This is because he wanted to establish consensus in his government. This is the book that had enabled consensus reached in his government.

Qunshu disappeared from circulation when Tang dynasty was overthrown. There was no printing technology during that era. Printing technology was only invented during the Song dynasty and before that all books were copied by hand. To copy such a voluminous collection was not easy and so not many sets were copied. The whole country probably had only 100 to 200 sets. *Qunshu* contained 500,000 words. Some Japanese students who studied in China during the Tang dynasty had taken the collection back to Japan. The Japanese knew the value of these books but not a single book was found in China. *Qunshu* went missing from the country for a thousand years. After ruling the Qing dynasty for 60 years, Emperor Qianlong relinquished the throne in favor of his son out of a respect for his grandfather, the Emperor Kangxi who ruled for 61 years. When his son Emperor Jiaqing rose to the throne, Japan paid tribute to China. Among the gifts was a set of *Qunshu Zhiyao*. Although this set of books was returned to China, no one treasured it. The prosperous reigns of Emperor Kangxi and Qianlong surpassed that of the Zhenguan Era (Tang dynasty). In Chinese history, no dynasty could be compared to the era of emperors

Kangxi, Yongzheng and Qianlong. At that time, China was the most supreme and powerful country in the world. If we look at the Chinese territory during that era, we can see that Siberia belonged to China, and this extended to the West, all the way to the Caspian Sea. In addition, the small Asian countries near China were its vassal states. China was very prosperous and so nobody really paid attention to these books. When the Qing dynasty ended and the Republic began, somebody found the books in the palace. The Commercial Press published the Japanese copy, and later published it again in small print as part of *Guoxue Congshu* (Chinese Literature Book Series). This was a small, pocket-sized set that consisted of ten books, and it went through two printings. This was done at the beginning of the Republic, probably before I was born. After the Qing dynasty met its downfall, there were wars and factional struggles in the Republic. Although China was unified in 1927, the country was still unstable because the Central Government's authority did not reach the remote areas. This was followed by the war between China and Japan, and the resistance lasted for eight years. After the Sino-Japanese War ended and the Chinese won, the war of liberation began. Chinese society remained chaotic until now. I estimated that about 1,000 copies of *Qunshu Zhiyao* and *Guoxue Congshu* were printed then. Books published during the Republic era were very expensive.

I thought these two sets of books had disappeared from circulation. I knew that Emperor Taizong had *Qunshu Zhiyao* but I had never read it before. So how did I know about it? I read a book called *Zhuzi Zhiyao* (The Principles of the Varied Schools of Thought), which was published by the

World Book Company. This book contains the last section of *Qunshu Zhiyao*. Altogether there were 50 volumes of books collected in *Qunshu*, and the last 20 volumes were published and circulated separately as *Zhuzi Zhiyao*. I have read this book before, so I knew about *Qunshu* through reading the former. I asked the Commercial Press, the World Book Company and other publishers about *Qunshu* and none of them knew about it. I mentioned *Qunshu* several times during my Dharma talks, feeling regret and sad that such a collection went missing. A member of the audience heard what I had said and took the trouble to trace the books. He managed to locate two types of publication, and he posted them to me. When I received these treasured collections, I felt so grateful! I thought: "Not only can we save China, we can also save the whole world now!" I immediately commissioned the World Book Company to reprint 10,000 copies, and later distributed them to university libraries all over the world. These books will never be lost again.

After about two months, I received another collection entitled *Guoxue Zhiyao* (Principle Collection of Classical Chinese Literature). I have been longing to get this collection. I had been thinking of it for more than ten years. How do we read *Siku Quanshu*, which is such a voluminous work? I thought about this and decided to engage the help of some experts and scholars who were retired Chinese language professors. My thought at that time was similar to that of Emperor Taizong: Extract important lessons from *Siku Quanshu* and *Siku Huiyao* and compile them into a book. So I spent tens of thousands of dollars to engage these experts to do the project. After three years, they showed me their works but I found them not practicable. These professors had

never taught the classics so they were unable to extract any substance from the ancient works. Nevertheless, the idea had never left my mind and I never expected that my audience would be able to find a copy of the *Guoxue Zhiyao*. My dream was realized. Although the book was very old and torn, the texts were complete; nothing was lost. As the book was very old and could be easily tattered, I quickly sent it to a printer and printed 10,000 copies. What is the content of this book? It provides the key to understanding *Siku Quanshu*. It offers you the method of selecting materials from *Siku Quanshu* and making a compilation.

I was really happy to have received these books. At my age, I am too old to start doing a compilation. My wish is to print the books for the younger generation, and if they could spend ten years on studying these classics, they would become the world's leading Han Studies specialists. It is hoped that they can use the wisdom, ideas, methods and experiences of the saints and sages from thousands of years ago to resolve the current social problems; applying the principles found in the books to resolve all types of conflicts within and among individuals, families, countries, races, ethnic groups and religions. This is what I called the "real treasures!" The money that I received from the public has been used to print these treasures. Buddhists are usually generous about distributing Buddhist Sutras but these books could hardly find any sponsors so I have to borrow money from Buddha and Bodhisattvas to carry out this good deed. Buddha is helping us to perpetuate traditional Chinese culture. The more books that one prints, the better it will be. We also need to translate these books into foreign languages so that foreigners could read and understand them. When for-

eigners find them useful, we can persuade them to learn archaic Chinese. Why? Only by mastering archaic Chinese can one understand ancient wisdom's original meanings. What you read now is the translation and not the original text. Reading the classics in the original context and reading the translated version is definitely not the same. Reading the original classics can open up one's wisdom, and this wisdom will help to improve one's ability to govern the country and bring peace and harmony to the world. This is because the books contain many valuable principles, methods, precious and rich experiences rarely found in today's society. Therefore ancient wisdom is very useful for current society. Contemporary social problems arose because we did not adhere to the teachings of the ancient saints and sages.

The sixth question: True wisdom can transcend space and time. Even though it is old, it is forever applicable. However, the question is: Whom can we learn ancient wisdom from?

Ven. Master Chin Kung: What you said is correct. True wisdom transcends space and time. It is applicable to any era, any environment, for any race, country, culture, and religion. There is not the slightest obstacle. You are right in asking from whom we should learn wisdom. I have given the Prime Minister a detailed answer to this question. He asked me: "How many among the professors in the Academy are Ph.D. or Master's degree holders? I said: "None so far." He looked at me with a very surprised expression. I said I know many professors who hold Han Studies doctorate degrees from Europe but they cannot teach this curriculum. He asked me for the reason. I said the current trend of Han studies is directed

toward the acquisition of knowledge. Students are using a Western method, which is different from the Chinese method consisting of learning through abiding by the precepts, attaining meditative concentration and letting wisdom arise. The students could acquire superficial knowledge but they could not master the true scholarship. This is why problems handled by the UN cannot be resolved. I have participated in more than ten international peace conferences and I met many people. But they could not solve problems because what they possessed was knowledge, not wisdom.

In a number of keynote speeches, I have introduced the ideas, methods, experiences and achievements of ancient Chinese sages to all the UN delegates. They were very happy to hear me talking about it and yet they doubt its practicality. After one conference, we ate and chatted, and questions began to pour in. These delegates asked me: "Venerable Master, what you said in your speech is fascinating, but it is only an ideal. It is not feasible." When I heard this, the words gave me a head-on blow. I realized the root cause of the problem, that is, the loss of faith. It is known as "confidence crisis" in present-day terms. I asked them: "Do you believe in yourself? Do you believe in your parents? Do you believe in your teachers? Do you believe in your ancestors? Do you believe in your leaders?" If all these are questionable, no wonder our world is in a mess.

The ancient classics are available. The question is: Who can teach us and help us to understand the wisdom lying beneath the words? There is no one to teach us, so what should we do? Fortunately, it is not difficult to master archaic Chinese. As long as one can master archaic Chinese, the language barrier will be lifted and one will

find a way to learn from the ancient masters and become a Han Studies expert. Later on, using the ancient concentration method of focusing on studying one subject over a long period and achieving understanding by reading a book a thousand time, we will naturally become enlightened. If we were to ask: From whom did the ancient Chinese saints and sages, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas learn? Nobody. Who was Sakyamuni Buddha's teacher? Who was Jesus Christ's teacher? Who was Prophet Muhammad's Teacher? Nobody. Who was Confucius's teacher? How did he become a saint? The ancient saints and sages told us that everyone possesses innate wisdom. I believe we can trust these words. We have the wisdom of the saints and sages. We possess the wisdom of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Buddha said: "All beings possess the wisdom and virtuous characteristics of the Thus Come One." Not only do you possess the wisdom of the Thus Come One, but you also have His virtues and dignified physical characteristics. The Chinese often speak in an implicit manner. They say that human nature is originally good. The meaning of "good" here can be equated to the "wisdom and virtuous characteristics of the Thus Come One". This goodness is not the same as the good in "good and evil". "Good" is a word of praise; it is ultimate goodness without the slightest flaws. It means perfection. That is the meaning of "good" here. We call it true self-nature. Success can only be achieved if we are confident that we can become saints and sages, and also if we believe that we can become Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. With confidence, we



can choose from the available classics and achieve success with any one subject that we chose. It is not necessary to study many classics. By focusing on one classic and comprehending it, we can easily understand other things by inference. For example, we are able to comprehend things that we have never learned or heard about. Where do wisdom and virtuous characteristics come from? They come from a pure mind.

The mind is like a mirror. In Buddhism, water is often used to represent the mind. When you present your offerings to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, the most important offering is water. It is all right to offer only a glass of water and nothing else. Water represents our mind; it represents that our mind is as clear and calm as water.

When the mind has all these qualities, it acts like a mirror. Things that are external to us can be reflected clearly, and this is referred to as "seeing the truth." The layperson's mind is impure and filled with discriminatory thoughts. When water is polluted, it becomes dirty; and when there are waves in the water, it cannot produce a clear reflection of the external environment. The reflection is thereby fragmented. Therefore, we must calm our mind. Doing so will allow our wisdom to arise naturally. On the other hand, vexations arise from a disturbed mind. It generates greed, anger, ignorance, arrogance and doubts. These will lead to selfishness and cause one to harm others for personal benefit. Providing that the mind is pure and balanced, it can reflect and perceive the true face of the universe, from which Love is born. Hence, love is the first

virtue generated from our true self-nature.

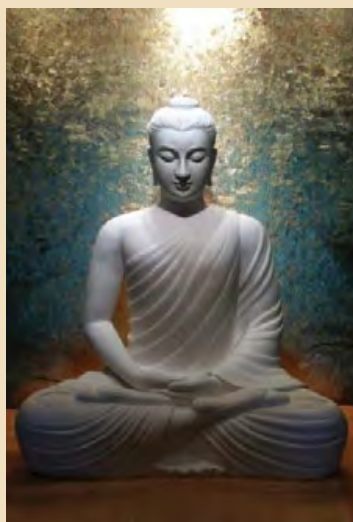
When we talk about the Five Human Relationships, we can see that the love between parents and children is natural. The Five Constants—benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and trustworthiness are derived from this love. It also engenders filial piety, fraternity, loyalty, trustworthiness, propriety, righteousness, integrity, shamefulness, benevolence, love, peace and harmony. In Buddhism, this love produces the Ten Virtuous Deeds, Six Paramitas, Three

Learnings and the Six Harmonies will flow naturally out of love. They are not learned skills. When Sakyamuni Buddha became enlightened and went on to spread the Dharma for 49 years, he delivered many sutras. He delivered the *Flower Adornment Sutra*. From where did he learn that? He delivered the *Lotus Sutra* and *Surangama Sutra*. Who taught him that? Nobody. All the Dharma that he had spoken came from the true

self-nature. Therefore Buddha said he had spoken nothing because all that he had said came from his true self-nature. If we claim that we have said something, it would mean that we have given some thoughts to what we were about to say and therefore what was spoken later was justifiably mine. But Buddha did not have any arising thoughts, discriminatory thoughts or attachments. If you ask him a question he will give you an answer. All the answers came out from him naturally. If we contemplate before giving a response, the response cannot be considered a true, genuine one. The new Chinese President, Mr. Xi Jin Ping, is correct in saying that a speech without prepared notes is true and

genuine. What is prepared beforehand is not the truth because it goes through your thoughts. When one stands on the podium and speaks without looking at the notes, he is speaking the truth. That is sensible. President Xi understood the principle. Prepared notes are unnecessary. Words should come from our true self-nature. That is real wisdom. Prepared speeches only contain knowledge. Wisdom and knowledge are not the same.

Therefore, the Chinese engage principles and methods for seeking wisdom that are totally different from what is taught in schools nowadays. Prof. Fang Dong Mei taught me philosophy at his home. I did not attend his lectures at the university. What Prof. Fang taught me was different from what he taught his students at the university. Why? It was because nobody was interested in the lessons that he gave me. Moreover, they could not understand



what those lessons were about. The key to learning is totally dependent on ourselves, and we must have unwavering faith in the saint and sages. For example, when we study the *Analects*, the dialogues between Confucius and his students, we must know the purpose of study. The purpose is to emulate Confucius. Will we succeed in doing so? Yes, we will. If we spend ten years on studying nothing but the *Analects*, reading it daily until we have gone through it a thousand times, our mind will become calm. All arising thoughts will be on the *Analects* so we would naturally enter into the realm of Confucius. It is not something we had learned from someone else. Therefore,

the Malaysian Academy of Han Studies in Malacca will not have any teachers or students. All those enrolled in the courses of the Academy will be researchers, and each of them will focus on one classic. Hopefully one will be able to teach that classic by the second or third year of study. With two to three years of preparation, it is hoped that the researchers can give a clear and detailed account of what they have studied in a way that is accessible to modern people. When the researchers are ready they could request the Academy to arrange a schedule of two hours per week for them to share what they have learned. They would present a written version of their lectures as proof of what they have done in their research. All the lectures will be recorded on video by the Academy, and the relevant materials can be sent to the Ministry of Education for auditing purposes. Although the Academy's system differs from that of other institutions, a formal assessment procedure is still necessary. When one passes the assessment, one will be awarded a Hans Studies doctorate degree by the Malaysian government. With this academic degree, one can specialize in teaching Han Studies in any academic institution or university in the world. Traditional Chinese culture can be revived through this method. While this is an urgent matter, one cannot be too anxious in carrying it out. If we try to rush things, we will not be successful because haste makes waste. It takes at least three years to calm one's mind. The most important thing is that one must possess a calm mind that is free of desires, letting go of fame and fortune. Great joy is derived from focusing the mind on learning. I have been doing it for 60 years, so I truly understand this. Nobody understands my happiness because they have not reached this level. Since others have not experienced

the same enjoyment, telling them about it will not be particularly useful. In actual fact, it is the real enjoyment. The greatest pleasure comes from letting go of all affinities. We will have no worries and no anxieties. The mind is pure, unpolluted, and it will go according to circumstances and not be affected by any external happenings whatsoever. Being unperturbed and going along with the circumstances is the state of a Buddha's mind. Bodhisattvas get along with circumstances and learn to hold an unperturbed mind. What are they practicing? When the six sensory organs (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind) come into contact with the external environment, they do so without any discrimination, attachment, or arising thoughts. At this particular juncture, what you see is wisdom, for you own the eye of wisdom; what you hear is wisdom, for you own the ear of wisdom. Everything will generate wisdom and no vexations will arise.

So whom should we learn from? We have to learn from the ancient saints and sages by looking inwards, by relying on ourselves. If I am studying the *Analects*, I have to emulate Confucius. He is my teacher and I will learn from him directly. If I am studying *Mencius*, Mencius is my teacher. I will learn from him directly so that his wisdom is passed on to me, and I can enter into the realm of Mencius. Hence, the way to learn is to choose a specific classical text and treat it like our teacher. By entering into the realm of our teacher, all you could think about is his words and nothing else. We will attain a calm mind through time. In Buddhism, this is called "Samadhi", which means an unperturbed mind. For example, if you study the *Analects* in depth, you will achieve Samadhi in the *Analects*. If you study *Mencius* in depth, you will achieve Samadhi in *Mencius*. The same goes with studying *Yi Jing* (Book

of Changes). In Buddhism, one will attain Samadhi in the *Flower Adornment Sutra*, or the *Lotus Sutra*, using the same method of study. All these can lead to an unperturbed mind. Our mind will become pure, balanced and enlightened. Upon the attainment of Samadhi and adding in another three to five years of further study, one will attain a great awakening and become proficient in all fields.

The researchers can lecture quite well after three years of study, and some time between the fifth and seventh year when they begin to enter into the stage of Samadhi they will gain the greatest enjoyment in life. If they persevere for another three years, they will achieve enlightenment. Sakyamuni Buddha exemplified this achievement to us, and so did Master Hui Neng, who was the Sixth Patriarch of the Zen Buddhist School from Tang dynasty. Master Hui Neng was illiterate. He never went to school but he managed to achieve enlightenment. How was that possible? His mind was pure and balanced. After Master Hui Neng became enlightened, he could give lectures on all the Buddhist or non-Buddhist classics that were read to him. Nobody had taught him. His teacher, the Fifth Patriarch of the Zen Buddhist School, explained the *Diamond Sutra* to him for two hours. That was the only two-hour lecture he had ever heard in his entire life and he attained enlightenment instantly. Hence, we have to believe in ourselves. A pure mind will yield wisdom; an impure mind will yield vexations. A balanced mind will yield great wisdom; an unbalanced mind will yield heavy vexations.

Therefore, the path pursued by both Buddha and the Chinese tradition was essentially the same. The method of abiding by precepts, attaining meditative concentra-

tion, and letting wisdom arise is a method of study originating from India. It was accepted and assimilated by both Confucianism and Daoism, subsequently affecting the study method in China to follow a similar path. Abiding by the precepts is to follow the rules and regulations. All homework given to us must be completed accordingly. What is the purpose of adhering to precepts? Its purpose is to attain concentration. This is something we ought to know. Teaching children to read classics helps them to calm down and concentrate. Nowadays, people do not understand the purpose of this endeavor. If we ask children to read modern textbooks, will they be able to stay focus? This should work theoretically but it is not as effective as reading the classics. What is the advantage of reading classics? Since children do not understand the classics, their minds tend to focus on the reading instead of wandering off into all sorts of ideas. On the contrary, when children read modern books and understand what they are reading, their mind will start to run wild. This is why people whose minds are filled with wandering thoughts should recite mantras instead of sutras. When they do not understand the mantra, they have to concentrate very hard in order to read it out smoothly. This is a wonderful method. You must get to know it! If you truly comprehend the method, you will really admire it. It is brilliant and extremely effective, and it is definitely feasible. The methods that we are going to employ at the Academy of Han Studies are inherited from the ancient saints and sages. We shall go according to their ideas, methods and experiences, and we believe that our achievements will be outstanding in ten years' time.

I knew about these things a long time

ago, but I never had the chance to take them further. I did not realize the extent of the crises in the world had I not participated in the UN activities. After attending more than ten international peace conferences, I began to realize the severity of present-day crises. I finally understood the root cause of such crises and how we could resolve them. However, understanding is one thing; putting principles into practice is another matter. Without any support, all efforts would be futile. If the Academy of Han Studies did not receive the Prime Minister's support, we could not realize our dream. So we are very grateful to the Prime Minister for approving our project because it has really boosted our confidence. In addition, the Malaysian Chinese, especially the Chinese school principals and teachers, have also rendered their support to this experiment. If 100 to 200 teachers each can dedicate themselves to mastering one classical subject, and if they are able to achieve favorable results in ten years' time, they will become the leading Han Studies teachers and a living proof that this method is viable. Then the method can be introduced to the world.

The seventh question: We live in an era of advanced science and technology. Many things, such as computers, Internet access, transport systems and so forth have made our lives more convenient. They have greatly narrowed the spatial distance between human beings. Can this not prove that the current society is better than society in the past?

Ven. Master Chin Kung: I think it is better to ask yourself than to ask me. Do you feel that the present society is better than the older society? You have not seen an older society; it need not be too long ago, but say a society 30 years back is something you have not seen, let alone a society that

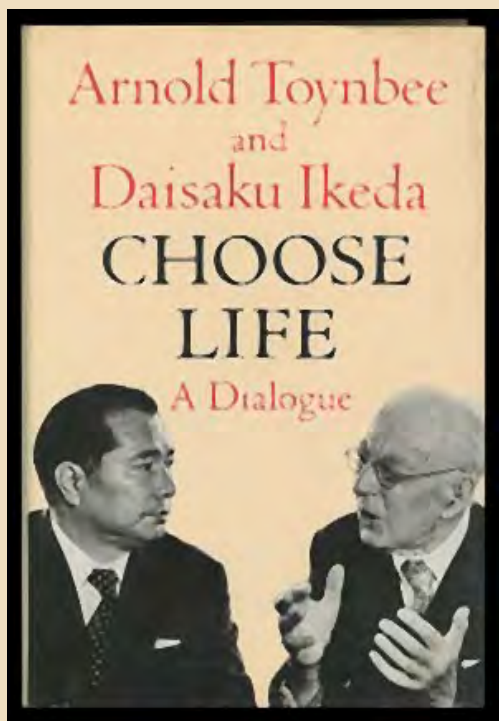
existed 60 years ago. You can ask elders who are over eighty years of age to share with you what life was like thirty or sixty years ago. They will tell you that transportation was not as convenient as it is now but people were happy. Nowadays, we have computers, Internet and television, all of which are supposed to serve as society's teachers but where are they leading us? You have personally experienced this. Did our ancient saints and sages have any knowledge of science and technology? If you think they did not, then their wisdom could not have been genuine. They truly possessed this knowledge. But why did they not make use of it? If they had invented the communication tools that we have now, perhaps the world would have ended already. Therefore, our ancestors had true wisdom. They were genuinely compassionate. They would never invent something that would bring huge, adverse effects to the society. The Chinese history contains records of scientists who destroyed their inventions before the inventions became popularized. During the era of Wang Mang, someone invented the glider for flying but the invention was destroyed afterwards. Zhuge Liang invented a mechanical wooden ox to carry supplies. When he passed away, everything was destroyed. Why? This is because science and technology should be developed in a place where people are virtuous and have a high level of integrity. If human relationships, moral and ethics cannot keep up with the pace of scientific and technological advancement, disasters will be inevitable. Human beings are capable of leading a very happy, peaceful and blissful life without science and technology. However, the existence of various inventions coupled with the abandonment of human relationships, moral and ethics will make people inhumane. What-

ever gadgets one gets hold of might be used for killing and destroying lives willfully. Moreover, they can damage the ecology and trigger disasters. Today we have the latest technology and capabilities but we have no regard for morality. People only focus on short-term benefits and if they could live for ten years they would make as much money as they could in ten years, thinking that all things will come to an end upon their death. They do not know that the real retribution comes after they die. They will continue to reincarnate in the Six Realms of existence, including the Hungry Ghost realm and the Hell realm.

These things exist right before us, but we do not believe in it. We have become insensitive and indifferent. Nowadays, many scientists do not believe in gods and spirits. They are unaware that these spiritual beings form the highest level of science. Quantum mechanics is getting closer to this idea. Science is capable of proving the existence of the Six Realms, and it can

also show evidence of the actual conditions in the Hungry Ghost and Hell realms mentioned in Buddhism. Buddhist practitioners can understand and accept the Six Realms. When they assert meditative concentration with a pure mind, they will be able to perceive the dimensions unseen by others. It is not hallucination; it is the truth. Meditative concentration will generate supernatural abilities, including heavenly eyes and ears, telepathic power, and the power to know happenings in the past, present and the future. In addition, one will have the power to travel anywhere at any time and adapt to any space. Currently, the transport system, internet and computers are machine-dependent. When one is in a deep state of meditation, all the aforementioned abilities will come naturally and there is no need for machines. The human brain is far superior to computers. Computers are incomparable to the human brain. A mind with wandering thoughts, discrimination and attachment is not as good as a computer. If we rid ourselves of them our mind will definitely be better than the computer.

Nowadays, computers can perform 1,000 trillion calculations per second. Some fellow practitioners have shown me the scientific report. This is really incredible. But according to the Buddhist sutra, Maitreya Buddha mentioned that a flick of fingers consists of 3.2 billion times 100,000 thoughts. Based on this calculation, 3.2 billion times 100,000 is 320 trillion. Within a flick of fingers 320 trillion thoughts arising and disappearing; so if a person could flick his fingers at least five times per second, this would mean 1,600 trillion (320 trillion times 5) thoughts arising and disappearing in one second. Comparing the speed of a scientific instrument (1,000 trillion cal-



culations per second) to the speed mentioned in Buddhist sutras, the difference is around 600 trillion times per second. How does Buddha know this? Buddhism talks about meditative concentration and encourages us to search inwards. Scientific investigation searches externally, so it cannot be better than Buddhism. Moreover, scientific studies have side effects whereas meditative concentration has none. The Dharma tells of 84,000 ways to attain meditative concentration. Anything that diverges from this is not Dharma. All the methods delivered are pertaining to precepts, so precepts will help one attain concentration. However, the ultimate aim is not about achieving concentration. It is only a means to an end. The ultimate goal is to awaken wisdom, a level of complete awakening where you can see through to your true self-nature. When our mind can see through to the truth of things, we will have a complete understanding of the universe. We can never achieve this through bookish learning, not even if we have studied for ten thousand years. Hence, according to the Buddha, cultivation means to seek wisdom by searching inwards, not outwards. We ought to know the important values in life and consider whether advanced technology will bring us blessings or calamities. The Chinese characters of blessing 福 and calamity 禍 are rather similar. It means that blessings can turn into calamities and calamities can turn into blessings. Everything depends on our intentions.

The eighth question: Many people hold two academic degrees nowadays. Due to the advancement in technology, the level of education and knowledge are much higher than before. The world should be getting better because the number of highly educated people is constantly on the rise.

Ven. Master Chin Kung: Logically speaking, this should be the case, but in fact the reverse is happening. What is the root cause of this problem? The cause is none other than a problematic education system. What do people teach nowadays? The answer to your question is as follows. Students who received ancient Chinese education often improved and became better persons. Why? It is because they had gained increased wisdom by following the correct principles and methods, and accumulated more experiences from studying ancient examples. There is no reason for them not to get better. Problems remained when we have lost faith in ourselves. In ancient times, the Chinese government was very strict in running the country, such as no freedom of speech or freedom of the press. The country wanted to ensure that everything was under control. All speeches and essays that violated human relationships, moral and ethics were forbidden so that they would not bring any harm to the people. Numerous authors of famous novels, such as the ones who wrote *Dreams in the Red Chamber*, *The Plum in the Golden Vase* and *Water Margin* are all suffering in Hell. Their novels brought bad influences to mankind and they had to be responsible for what they had written. Some of these fiction writers who are in the Hell realm came to seek my help to expiate their sins. So I prepared a memorial tablet with their names on it and invited them to listen to Dharma talks. If they can understand the Dharma and sincerely repent, they will be able to leave the Three Evil Realms (Animal, Hungry Ghosts and Hell). The greatest merit is none other than chanting Amituofo—the name of the Amitabha Buddha. Since it is the greatest merit, why don't we chant Amituofo? If the mass media, including TV and internet can broad-

cast Dharma talks and show images of the Buddha, their merit is boundless! They will be able to save current society. I often said that there are two kinds of people who can save the world: the leader of a country and the leader of the mass media. The leader of a country has authority over the mass media, and he can save the country by making sure that the programs on national television and radio stations propagate human relationships, moral and ethics, cause and effect. If the mass media continues to broadcast programs that show killing, stealing, sexual misconduct and improper speech, he will lead the country toward destruction. The other person who can save the world is the leader of the mass media. The consequences of his actions are indeed serious! One good thought could save the world, and one evil thought could destroy the world.

The ninth question: As we have just said, the advancement of technology and education has enabled the younger generation to gain more knowledge, but what would be the result if they do not possess wisdom?

Ven. Master Chin Kung: You can see it for yourself. Just look at those people around you and you will find the answer. If wisdom exists, things will be different. No matter what you do you will feel happy and joyful. The level of spirituality will be raised rather than lowered.

The tenth question: Will the ancient learning methods and their content help students acquire the relevant employment skills?

Ven. Master Chin Kung: Many people are worried about this employment issue. Of course ancient wisdom is helpful in this respect. I have walked the path laid out by ancient sages all my life and done away

with the modern way of living. I learned philosophy from Prof. Fang Dong Mei when I was 26, and I entered the discipline of Buddhism through philosophy. Buddhism is philosophy of the highest degree. Most people consider it a religion, and some even say that Buddhism is superstition. This is very wrong. People should try to understand it before passing definitive comments. Otherwise, they have to be responsible for what they say. One does not need to believe it but for that to hinder others from believing it bears serious consequences. I began learning Buddhism at the age of 26, and when I was 31, I began my study under Mr. Lee Bing Nan. That particular year, Taiwan encountered a very serious flood. I was working as a librarian in the Ci-Guang Library, then newly-founded by my teacher. There was a church opposite us, and we were separated by a small stream. One day, one of the church members came over to visit the library. I was there to receive him and I found out that he was from Anhui Province, my hometown. He was a devout Christian and he came over to criticize Buddhism saying that Buddhism was worthless. There were many people in the reading room. Some were reading magazines, others were reading newspapers and everybody heard him talking vehemently. I just nodded as he spoke, but I said nothing. After about one and a half hour, I poured him a cup of tea and said: "You must be very thirsty. Please speak slowly." The more he talked, the happier he became. The people in the library looked at me as though I had little or no ability to deal with him apart from listening to him respectfully.

After more than two hours, he began to feel tired. I said: "Please take a break. I would like to ask you a question." He asked

me what the question was about. I said: "If we want to comment on an essay, we must read it first, right?" He agreed. Then I asked him: "You have criticized Buddhism for about two hours, and I feel a bit tired listening to it. The people here also heard what you said. Have you ever read a Buddhist sutra?" He said he had never done so. I said: "We conduct Dharma talks in this library every Wednesday. Have you ever attended any of these talks?" He answered no again. I said: "You are brave indeed! Aren't you afraid that these people may laugh at you?" Saying a few words was enough to make him feel ashamed. He blushed and left. The next day, he brought his pastor over to apologize to me. I said: "You are most welcome to come and refute Buddhism. You will be able to save many sentient beings. But in order to win, you must have a good understanding of your own religion and that of others. How could one pass any judgment without fully understanding the Buddha's teachings? All the people here know the Dharma well, so they will laugh at your ignorance." Anyway, we became friends. As long as one does not have a good comprehension of something, one is in no position to make comments, be it positive or negative. This is the decent attitude we should hold. These days, many people criticize others' religion incessantly when they in fact know nothing about that religion. My fellow townsman was a good man. Not only did he admit defeat but he also came back to apologize to me the very next day.

From the time of uniting the nine main religions in Singapore (1999) until now, I have begun reading the scriptures of other religions. I compiled a book called *One Humanity, Many Faiths*. I wrote a few words at the back of the book: "The root of all religions is benevolence and compassion, and

their purpose is to educate all living beings to treat each other equally, live together harmoniously, and co-exist prosperously." We have distributed this book to some fellow members of the UN. In order to understand all the religions, we have to read their scriptures. I have fostered good relationships with other religions for more than a decade now, and I did not encounter any obstacles. They always welcome me because I read their scriptures and try to understand their teachings. They have not gone in-depth into Buddhist sutras, therefore the topics we discussed during visits mainly revolved around their religions. During the entire time, I have never heard them libel other religions rashly. Therefore, religions can truly be united because the core teaching of all religions is "Love." Religious education is an education of love. When I participated in international peace conferences in the recent years, I used the Chinese characters for religion, *Zong Jiao* 宗教, to explain its true meaning. The word *Zong* 宗 has a number of meanings, but three of its most important meanings include: the primary, the important, and the venerated. *Jiao* 教 also carries three meanings: education, teaching, and transformation. When we combine the two characters, it means the primary education of human beings, the most important teaching, and the most venerated transformation. This definition is accepted by all religions. They say that the explanation is perfect. When all the different religions are united, we are like brothers and sisters in a big, happy family. In 2006, I brought the nine religious representatives from Singapore and the Jewish representative from Australia to participate in an event organized by the UN. We presented a performance called "Praying for peace and harmony in the world" in the UNESCO Assembly Hall. The ten reli-

gious representatives held hands during the performance. After they had done the collective prayer, each religion prayed individually for peace and harmony. The whole program lasted for 50 minutes. That was the first time all the religions prayed together at a UN activity. In May 2013, we will do the same thing at the same venue. This will help to resolve conflicts and bring forth peace and harmony in our society.

Question No. 11: Will the ancient learning methods and their content be able to help students acquire the relevant employment skills?

Ven. Master Chin Kung: Everyone welcomes a wise person regardless of where he works. The younger generation nowadays has not learned about ancient wisdom (innate wisdom that everyone possesses) but they have learned a lot about scientific knowledge. They obtain one degree after another but are unable to find employment. Ironically, many entrepreneurs told me that they had difficulty in finding employees. There are so many graduates who may know how to do a job but they do not know how to conduct themselves. This is very problematic. Bosses will not hire highly educated people who do not know how to conduct themselves. This is a current social problem. Therefore, we promote the study of the three fundamentals, deriving from Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism, starting with the teaching of *Dizigui* (Guidelines for Being a Good Person). When the entrepreneurs heard this, they were very happy. Some of them even included *Dizigui* as one of the qualifications in selecting eligible new employees. Those who have studied *Dizigui* will be given priority. The current education system at school does not include *Dizigui* in their normal curriculum.

Question No. 12: Could Ven. Master kindly share with us the ancient wisdom that has been neglected by our younger generations?

Ven. Master Chin Kung: The most obvious one is that young people nowadays have no respect for their parents and teachers. They have no problems with mastering knowledge in science and technology, but they will have problems learning the scholarship of the saints and sages as a result of this disrespectfulness. Teachers will not teach you if you do not pay attention. If your mind keeps wandering off, it shows that you do not respect and believe in your teacher. The teacher knows he is wasting his time and energy, and talking to you would be like talking to a wall so what is the point of teaching you anything? And what about learning from the sages? Sage scholarship is something stemming from our innate nature. It is your truthful mind. When your truthful mind is restored, you will find that the wisdom, virtues and good physical characteristics that are embedded inside this truthful mind will emerge from within. You cannot beg to receive them from outside. If we are not sincere toward our parents, how can we be sincere toward others? Other than the parents, the ancients also regard teachers as the second parents. As an old Chinese saying goes: "Our parents gave us life; our teachers gave us wisdom." Nowadays, many people are unfilial toward their parents, discourteous toward their teachers, and disrespectful toward their own ancestors. They pay no attention to the things passed down by the ancestors. This is the crux of the problem.

Question No. 13: What were the damages that knowledge had brought in the past 150 years?

Ven. Master Chin Kung: Knowledge will not actually bring any harm. In Dr Sun Yat-sen's Three Principles of the People (Nationalism, Democracy and the People's Livelihood), he mentioned in his speech that Westerners were superior to the Chinese when it came to making machines. But in other fields, they were incomparable to the Chinese. He made this observation from his extensive travelling abroad. It is a real pity that Dr Sun died young. The young Chinese, especially those who studied abroad, became fascinated and attracted by Western machinery. Their curiosity was aroused and they gradually lost faith in traditional Chinese culture. Teachers cannot help those who are unenthusiastic about learning. Students continued to attend classes and teachers continued to teach, but with the loss of confidence in traditional culture, the latter began to dwindle and decline rapidly. Every decade, the situation worsened and things kept going downhill until the present day. All faith is lost. So why do we raise this question today? It is because science brought many crises and calamities to mankind and we are very aware of the possibility of a fatal war.

The war today is different from wars in the past. It could destroy the whole world. America is strong but they are still afraid of the North Koreans if the latter decide to start a war with America. You should know that once a war erupted, it is not a matter between two countries. Those countries with nuclear weapons might get involved too! When all the nuclear weapons are deployed, the world could be destroyed within a day, and that would be the end of our world. The Americans began to restrain themselves when they deliberated carefully whether they want to carry on living or not. If we wish to live, then we cannot start a war. If

we wish to die together, then everyone will deploy their nuclear weapons like exploding firecrackers. Nobody could escape death and the world would come to an end. Therefore, America would prefer a conventional war, not a nuclear war. But no other country could beat America in a conventional war because America has the finest weapons. So if a country were to start a war it would be a huge war as oppose to a conventional war. When everyone had given this scenario its deserved considerations, no further actions were taken. Such is the destruction brought by knowledge. Its most damaging feature is that it made people feel insecure and this can trigger a huge disaster, let alone people are continuing to develop and make nuclear weapons when disasters are looming ahead. This is a great error indeed! Why don't the governments use the funds for developing military weapons to benefit the people? People will be grateful to their governments for taking care of them. Nobody likes wars, and nobody wants wars. Hence, people resent strongly against governments found to spend lots of public money on arming themselves. Starting a war today definitely cannot resolve current social problems. The person who initiates a war is a war criminal and will go to the Hell realm when he dies. Furthermore, science and technology have caused a lot of damage to the natural environment resulting in countless disasters.

Question No. 14: How can traditional Chinese culture benefit Malaysians who live in a multiracial and multicultural country? The percentage of races is as follows: Malays, 51%; Chinese, 23%; Indians 7%; Others, 19%.

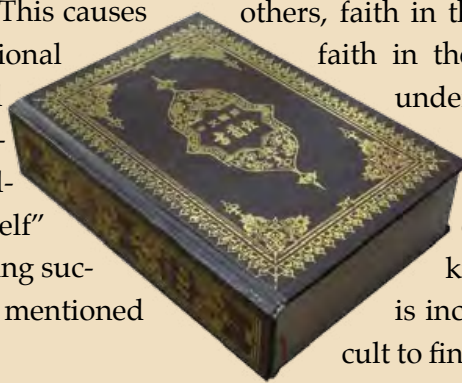
Ven. Master Chin Kung: If you truly study traditional Chinese culture, you will realize that traditional Chinese culture does not belong to the Chinese alone. The Chinese

classics hardly mention the word “country.” Instead, most of the texts mention the word *Tian Xia* 天下, which literally means “all under heaven,” or, the whole world. This shows that the Chinese were broad-minded as they often talked about the world instead of an individual country per se. The word *Ping* 平 means fairness, everyone treating each other fairly and harmoniously living together. Traditional Chinese culture talks about family management, good government, and bringing peace and harmony to the world, allowing every country to receive fair and equal treatment and live in harmony. Not only will this culture bring benefits to Malaysia, but also the truth is it will bring benefits to every country, every ethnic group, every religion and every faith in this world. This is the spirit of “treating each other fairly and living in harmony.” With sincerity, you will be able to understand the gist of traditional culture and enter into its domain. Without sincerity, you would not be able to do so. The greatest difficulty in learning and promoting traditional culture is that there is a general lack of sincerity, respect, and trust among people. This causes an obstruction to learning traditional culture. Sincerity, respect and trust are in fact within our original true self-nature. Thus Buddha brought up “faith in oneself” as the foremost aspect of achieving success. Only Buddha would have mentioned this.

In his *Commentary of the Amitabha Sutra*, Ven. Master Ou Yi stated that the three criteria for successful cultivation in the Pure Land School are: faith, vow, and implementation. In his commentary, the *Amitabha Sutra* is divided into three parts: introduction, main section, and text trans-

mission. In every section Master Ou Yi had mentioned faith, vow and implementation. Among all the virtuous practitioners from the past, Master Ou Yi was the only one who had said so in this manner. Moreover, Master Ou Yi elaborated six aspects of faith. First and foremost is faith in oneself. This is extremely important. One can only attain complete enlightenment when one fully believes that one was originally a Buddha. Hence, the Dharma stresses the importance of believing in oneself. Second is faith in others. What does “others” mean here? They include Sakyamuni Buddha and Amitabha Buddha. Amitabha Buddha created the Land of Ultimate Bliss, whereas Sakyamuni Buddha introduced us to the ways of cultivation. To the one who was the builder and the other the introducer, we have absolute faith in them. Noticed that Buddhism placed faith in others in second place, and placed faith in oneself in first place. This is different from other religions. In religion, you must first believe in God (faith in others). Buddhism is not like that. It placed faith in oneself first, followed by faith in others, faith in the fundamental law, and faith in the practices. Once this is understood, confidence is at hand. Finally, one has to believe in cause and effect. Without these six kinds of belief, one’s faith is incomplete. It is really difficult to find a person who possesses these six aspects of faith now.

I trust that I can find someone like that in Malaysia. The first person who demonstrated this was the Prime Minister. When I introduced the idea of traditional Chinese culture to Prime Minister Najib, he listened very attentively and was very happy to hear



what I said. Prophet Muhammad delivered the Qur'an. Just like Master Hui Neng from China, Prophet Muhammad was also an illiterate. As he delivered the Qur'an, it was recorded and became a treasured scripture thereafter. Where did the Prophet learn this? It emanated from his true self-nature. The affinity came from Allah. Allah blessed the Prophet with true wisdom. With the presence of the cause and the affinity, the Qur'an was produced. It is easy to explain the whole process using Mahayana Buddhism. Everyone can learn and achieve success. Moreover, one who has studied traditional culture will find a job easily, in addition to being an outstanding Han Studies expert. A Han Studies expert is a multi-talented person because he possesses wisdom. If he works in the private sector he could become the best manager or the best supervisor because he understands how management works. No enterprise can succeed without good managers. Wise people are most likely to become leaders, and managers are leaders. How could they not be able to find a job? People cannot get a job because they display traits of arrogance, greed, anger and ignorance. When employers see these bad qualities, they will shy away from you. They will not hire you even if you have the skill and ability.

Question No. 15: At present, advancement in science and technology seems to be irreversible. But in order to build a harmonious society our society requires a parallel development in moral education. Current societies tend to overlook moral education. How can we guide people toward implementing moral and ethics in their daily lives?

Ven. Master Chin Kung: This is a very good question and the answer is something we need to know quite urgently. What is the

method that we can use? I have suggested to the Prime Minister that he should train 50 to 60 teachers to give lectures on "Human Relationships, Moral and Ethics, Cause and Effect." The teaching material can be extracted from the ancient classics and religious scriptures, as well as collected from international news reports. By compiling these into a collection of course materials, the teachers can immediately use them to begin their lectures on national radio and television stations. Civil servants should be encouraged to be the first to watch this program, followed by the public. I trust that the society and the country will return to the right track after one year of learning traditional culture. This country will become the first model country of this kind on the world stage. Our aim is to produce model villages and towns, model cities and model countries. If Malaysia could become the first model country, the merits accrued will be boundless! Other countries could visit Malaysia and learn how to sustain equal and harmonious relationships among individuals, races and religions. This is a vocation of great significance! The Prime Minister will not only be the Prime Minister of Malaysia, but he will be the Prime Minister of the entire world. An example appeared roughly 3,800 years ago in Chinese history, and the ruler was King Tang of the Shang dynasty. The other example can be found 3,200 years ago, during the reigns of King Wen and King Wu of the Zhou dynasty. These kings ruled their countries so well that the world wanted to learn from them and accepted them as *Tian Zi* (Son of Heaven). At that time, these kings did not unify the *Tian Xia* (defined as "world"); they merely ruled over a few small kingdoms. They governed the country well and people were happy. Everything was on the right track. Neighboring coun-

tries came and followed in their footsteps, and King Tang, King Wen and King Wu were regarded as role models. They were well respected and considered to be leaders of the *Tian Xia*. If this could be done, I have faith in Malaysia that it will be able to do the same too!

The last question: People nowadays pursue wealth and equate success with the amount of money earned. How do we let go of the attachment to wealth?

Ven. Master Chin Kung: Wealth will increase one's greed, anger, ignorance and arrogance. They will lead to many disasters. According to the Dharma, they could bring illness to an individual by causing one's internal organs to become unhealthy. Greed, anger, ignorance, arrogance and doubt are known as the "Five Poisons" in Buddhist terminology. Why do humans fall sick? These poisons affect our body and make our body vulnerable to bacteria. In other words, they cause us to experience problems in our immune system and make us susceptible to diseases. Without greed, anger, ignorance, arrogance and doubt (the healthiest mindset one can ever have), one will never fall sick throughout one's life. His body is resistant to diseases because he has a healthy body and a healthy mind. He is not greedy and he is not angry. Greed can easily lead to kidney problems; anger affects liver function and causes liver problems. Ignorance is not good for the heart. These are some of the internal health problems that correspond to the effects of the Five Poisons. Moreover, the Five Poisons can create corresponding natural disasters. The Buddhist sutra teaches us that greed could result in flood, and anger could result in fire, volcanic eruption, and the rising temperature on earth. All these correspond to the effects of anger. Ignorance

could result in wind-related disasters while arrogance could result in earthquakes. Doubt is the worst as it can result in landslides and the subsidence of land. If the inhabitants on earth could control the Five Poisons, the world will not be struck by such terrible calamities. The Buddha has also taught us the proper way of acquiring wealth. He said that whatever one hopes to achieve, one's prayers will be answered. This can happen provided one knows the correct method of acquiring what they are not destined to have. What one is destined to possess does not count. If we read Liao Fan's Four Lessons, we will have a good understanding of this principle.

When I started with Buddhism, my teacher was Master Zhang Jia, a monk of great virtue, wisdom and knowledge. He wanted to help me. As I did not cultivate well in my past lives, I was destined to be poor and lowly—poor as in having no wealth; lowly as in having no status. At the lowest point of my life I would become a beggar. That was my destined fate. Moreover, my destined lifespan was 45 years old. I believe all these characteristics defined this life of mine: poor, lowly, and dying young. However, Master Zhang Jia taught me a way that could change my destiny forever. He said that wealth could be attained by the act of charitable giving. I told my teacher that I was already very poor and could not afford to give anything to others. He asked if I had ten cents and I answered yes. Then he asked again: "How about one dollar?" Well, I could manage that too. So my teacher said: "You should cultivate the act of giving things to others, starting from small amounts like ten cents and one dollar. Persevere with this practice. The more you give, the more you will receive." I abided

by his teaching dutifully, and after half a year, there was an increase in my salary. I have continued doing this for 62 years, and the more I give, the more I receive. I have proven my teacher right. By spreading the Dharma, one will acquire intelligence and wisdom. Everybody can see this. I am getting better and better at it as time passes by. The more I speak, the more perceptive and at ease I become. I find that my wisdom is increasing year by year. This is why I do not listen to my past Dharma talks. While my wisdom increases, the third type of giving, which is to relieve others of worry and fear has brought me good health and longevity. When I was 45 years old, I became seriously ill. Four of my students, one from the National Taiwan Normal University, one from the National Chengchi University and two others from the National Taiwan University came to look after me. I thought to myself that my time was due, so I decided not to seek medical help. I understood that doctors could not give me back my life. I chanted the Amitabha Buddha's name and sought to be reborn into the Western Pure Land. After chanting for one month, I completely recovered from my illness. Since then, I have never been admitted to the hospital in my life and I have not had any serious illnesses. I might have minor bouts of cough and cold, but nothing too major. This is the result of relieving others of worry and fear. Master Zhang Jia taught me the three types of giving: make charitable donations, spread the Dharma and relieve others of worry and fear. If one practices the three types of giving dutifully, one will be wealthy, intelligent and wise, and possess a healthy and long life. I practiced according to the Dharma, and you can see that I am the living proof of this belief, having practice it for 62 years. Although I did not make a fortune, it was

quite remarkable that whenever I wished to do something that required money, the amount needed will come to me naturally. I need not worry about soliciting charitable donations. If the money is not available, I will just put my wish aside. That is how at ease I am!

In the recent twenty years or so, we have begun to broadcast our Dharma talks on the internet. We have done this for twenty years, and used satellite TV for eleven years to complete world coverage. I have no temple, no disciples, and no income. But my support comes from all over the world. Everybody is happy because I spend very little, so it is easy for people to take care of me. As for charitable giving, I do it according to my ability. The more I receive, the more I contribute to charities. If I do not receive anything, I am happy too, as I need not worry about how to distribute the money. One can be completely at ease! Upon giving, do not recall what one has given. The mind must always be pure. Always talking about what good deeds have been done is an attachment to the act of giving, and your merits would turn into blessings. No matter how many good deeds you have done, do not be attached to them. Merits can help us to seek rebirth in the upper level of Pure Land, whereas blessings are the fruits enjoyed by humans and celestial beings. The latter have no wish to escape the cycle of reincarnation and they are simply cultivating for a blissful fortune. When one's fortune is enormous, one cannot reach the Land of Ultimate Bliss. Pure Land practitioners ought to know this. Hence, we can seek wealth by the practice of giving. I was destined to have nothing in my life, but my teacher taught me how to change my destiny. Using this method, you can be assured that whatever you have cultivated will come to you.

Money is currency. It comes and goes because it is used as a medium of exchange. If it keeps coming and not going it is no different from stagnant water. Stagnant water will overflow and cause floods, bringing in disasters. In short, if we give according to what we have, what comes after will be more than what was given, as if interest has been earned. I am saying this from my 62 years of experience in giving. Please do not be afraid of giving. The more you give, the more you will receive. When every cent is given away, the money will be replenished, and you will give it away once again. There will come a point when even the act of giving can become a nuisance. When money pours in, you have to think about how to give it away in a proper manner. One is responsible for making sure that the money is used for helping or benefiting the public. The best way to help all living beings today is to help them understand traditional culture, help them comprehend Buddhism, and finally, teach them the way of attaining enlightenment. In reality, man is a pitiful being because he does not know that Buddhism is the best thing in the world and he is afraid of the word Buddha. That is really sad! Who is Buddha? We are all Buddhas. The foremost criterion in Buddhism is to

have faith in oneself. One must believe that one is a Buddha, that one was originally a Buddha. Those who do not believe in this are denying themselves from becoming a Buddha. How can they be successful? Many of our neighbors did not believe in the Buddha. They came to ask me why they dislike hearing about the Buddha. I then asked them what Buddha means. They had this idea that when someone dies, he must rely on the Buddha to expiate his sins. I told them that was not a correct view. What is the meaning of Buddha? Buddha means longevity. Do you want longevity? Buddha also means wealth and nobility in two ways: perfect in wisdom and perfect in blessings. Do you want these? If you dislike Buddha, despise Buddha, it means that you despise wealth and blessings, despise wisdom, and despise longevity. If you do not want all these things, you will end up with nothing. We have to be absolutely clear about this. Nothing in this world or beyond can be more remarkable than the Buddha. It means a smooth-sailing journey throughout one's life.

I have answered all the questions and reached the end of our session.

Thank you.



The Complete Library of the Four Branches of Literature

1,502 books in 113 case / set • Each case: 45cm(L) x 29cm(W) x 33cm(H)

• Weight: 2858.6 kg / set

The Complete Library of the Four Branches of Literature

It is thanks to the concerted effort of practicing the teachings of morality, ethics and causality by both royals and subjects, the Chinese nation has maintained a five-thousand year civilization and social harmony with enduring peace and stability. The promotion of the education was ingenious, convenient and proper that had extensively influenced all domains of national politics, economies and infrastructure. Of all the historical documents, the *Complete Library of the Four Branches of Literature* has the most comprehensive record.

Under the order of Emperor Qianlong, the book was compiled by a team led by Chief Ministers Yu Minzhong and Ji Jun of the Qing dynasty. It is a curiosity that embraced all types of Chinese literature in

circulation during that time and the most important books of *Great Statutes of the Yongle Reign (Yongle Da Dian)*. Seven copies were made and distributed in various places. But most of them were destroyed during the wars and only two manuscripts remain in existence nowadays, of which Wen yuan copy is the best preserved. The collection consists of 1,500 thread-bound books with 3,460 types and more than 79,000 volumes that are categorized by classical works, historical works, philosophical works and belles-lettres. The content is all inclusive. This collection is considered the most splendid jewel of worldly knowledge and culture, and is an intelligent guide to health and happiness for human beings.



Selections from the Four Branches of Literature

500 books in 32 case / set • Each case: 44cm(L) x 30cm(W) x 35cm(H) • Weight: 800 kg / set

Selections from the Four Branches of Literature

The purpose of compiling the *Complete Library of the Four Branches of Literature* during the Qing Dynasty was to collect all the different types of books from across the country. The collection was vast and not easy to be retrieved. Emperor Qianlong therefore ordered to select only the best passages and assemble them into a new book, whose format is the same as the *Complete Library of the Four Branches of Literature*. The new book titled, *Selections from the Four Branches of Literature*, was assembled specifically for the King. The selected books, dated from the Qin to Qing Dynasties, were all superior in content, and comprehensive with rare deletions and changes. Its ideological content, academic

worthiness and phrasings are all of the highest quality. This selection perfectly embodies the essence of traditional Chinese culture.

Although the selected types of books were only one seventh of the *Complete Library of the Four Branches of Literature*, the volumes were one third of it, whilst, the *Selections from the Four Branches of Literature* is better preserved and the content surpasses that of the *Complete Library of the Four Branches of Literature*.

Owing to wars, the Chizao Tang copy is the only one that has been well preserved and recently reprinted. This is a great fortune and merit to the history of Chinese civilization as well as humanity.



Imperial Compilation of Books on the Principles of Governing (Hardcover)

3 books / set • 62 sets / case

Each case:

50.5cm(L) x 34.5cm(W) x 23.4cm(H)

• Weight: 3.83kg / set



Imperial Compilation of Books on the Principles of Governing (Paperback)

10 books / set • 4 sets / case

Each case:

43.5cm(L) x 32.7cm(W) x 21cm(H)

• Weight: 4.5kg / set

Imperial Compilation of Books on the Principles of Governing

The book, *Imperial Compilation of Books on the Principles of Governing*, was compiled at the beginning of the Zhenguan period during the Tang Dynasty, under the order of Emperor Taizong, Li Shimin (ad.599-659). Emperor Taizong, along with his father, launched a revolt to settle the chaotic society when he was only sixteen years old. He had been busily engaged in warfare for more than ten years until acceding to the throne at the age of twenty seven. Thereafter, he stopped military activities and emphasized the promotion of culture and education; especially ways to stabilize society, boost social and economic development, and nourish people.

Emperor Taizong was valiant and eloquent, but due to engaging in warfare at his young age, he regrettably didn't have the opportunity to read much. But bearing in mind the lessons learnt from the downfall of the Sui Dynasty, which was the dynasty before the Tang Dynasty, the Emperor profoundly understood the difficulties of founding a country and maintaining its peace and stability. During his reign, he encouraged officials to point out and admonish his improper decisions. The Emperor ordered imperial admonishers, such as Wei Zheng, Yu Shinan and so forth to identify documents from past

dynasties that were concerned about principles, methods and experiences of cultivating oneself, maintaining family relationships and governing a state. They selected the essence from the Six Classics, Four Historiographies and the Masters' Hundred Schools and compiled them into a book. The source for these documents began in ancient times and ended during the Jin Dynasty. The content was selected from more than 14,000 books, 89,000 volumes, and included quotations from 65 classical works. In all, there are more than 500,000 Chinese characters.

This is a treasured and revered book, as stated in the book's preface by Wei Zheng, "This book helps us to review and draw on the experiences of the past and make practical decisions today; it is a valuable and useful resource for future generations." Since the content was rich, profound and essential, Emperor Taizong was very fond of it and read it every day. He sighed to his ministers saying, "I can read and learn from the experiences of past dynasties, and understand how to administer current government affairs. It is all due to your effort." Hence, we understand that the stability and prosperity of the Zhenguan period was largely owed to this book. This book is indeed a treasure for all politicians.



Compilation of Chinese Literature on Cultivation (Hardcover)

8 books / set • 2 sets / case

Each case:

44.5cm(L) x 29.5cm(W) x 24cm(H)

• Weight: 8.36kg / set



Compilation of Chinese Literature on Cultivation (Paperback)

8 books / set • 2 sets / case

Each case:

43.6cm(L) x 29.4cm(W) x 23cm(H)

• Weight: 7.65kg / set

Compilation of Chinese Literature on Cultivation

Traditional Chinese culture is both extensive and profound. These distinctive Chinese cultural traditions have been recorded and categorized into four parts, namely classical works, historical works, philosophical works and belles-lettres. The precious ideas and qualities of traditional Chinese culture have figured prominently in history, and continue to this day. This collection, the *Compilation of Chinese Literature on Cultivation*, embraces comprehensive and profound theories as well as principles of Chinese civilization. The content was selected after careful consideration and assembled into seven volumes. This is a substantial number of documents for people who want to study and are passionate about traditional Chinese culture. This collection is a shortcut to study the Complete Library of the Four Branches of Literature. The content is abundant but not superfluous; succinct but not rough. According to one's need, one may delve into only one volume, but studying the other companion volumes will help achieve a more complete understanding. This collection is indeed a valuable resource for people who are fond of learning and pursuing advanced studies.

The modern accomplished Buddhist practitioner, Venerable Master Chin Kung, has devoted his entire life to the promotion of the education

of traditional Chinese culture. This education includes Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. He advocates and studies the Buddhist teachings of true sincerity and compassion and truly practices the concept of "Harmonious society, harmonious world." The Master follows the example of Master Yinguang by using donated money to print valuable books for the benefit of human beings. He has printed one hundred sets of the Complete Library of the Four Branches of Literature, two hundred sets of Selections from the Four Branches of Literature, ten thousand sets of Imperial Compilation of Books on the Principles of Governing, and ten thousand sets of *Compilation of Chinese Literature on Cultivation*. These books will be provided to leaders, politicians and virtuous people as reference material to govern their countries and advance world peace. We hope these treasured books can be promoted and used extensively. We hope the wisdom of the ancient sages will benefit and nourish mankind. The Master appeals to people with lofty ideals to pay profound attention to the teachings of the saints and sages, to popularize religious education, and to carry forward the splendid traditional Chinese culture. We sincerely wish that the utmost virtues and wisdom of ancient saints will grace all the people in the world and bless world peace!

Let Love and Compassion Prevail the Universe

A brief Introduction to Venerable Master Chin Kung's Thoughts

Eighty-six-year-old Venerable Master Chin Kung has delved into Buddhist teachings for more than half a century. He has summarized the Buddha's teachings into ten phrases—

*“Utmost Sincerity, Purity of Mind,
Respecting every being impartially,
Proper Understanding, Loving-Kindness,
Seeing Through, Letting Go,
Accord with Conditions, The Great Freedom,
and Mindfulness of Amitabha Buddha”*

The above are the ten essential creeds of Buddhist teachings that Venerable Master keeps sharing with everyone. The ten are enlightening that can serve as remedies for modern people to correct their mistakes and check their evil habitual tendencies.

Since a young age, Venerable Master has been learning Buddhist sutras deeply and thoroughly, and practicing the teachings in his life earnestly. During the 56 years of unabatedly lecturing on Buddhism, Venerable Master has imparted the profound and elusive Buddhist teachings in an accurate yet



simple, and philosophical yet understandable way. Hence the ultimate truth of the entire universe that is revealed in the Buddhist sutras can be perceived by common audiences.

In order to edify young masters, Venerable Master also spares no effort to instruct and guide talented young venerables in order to perpetuate the heritage of the Buddha's wisdom and maintain Buddhist education.

Another one of Venerable Master's life-time commitments is to revive Buddhist education. He wisely realizes that the real meaning of Buddhism lies in Buddha's teachings whose aim is to guide all beings in the universe to attain the Buddhahood of enlightenment.

Venerable Master's ceaseless promotion of Buddha's teachings has greatly enhanced the demand for books and audio-visual products on Buddhism. Over the years, Venerable Master has freely distributed numerous publications all over the world.

Nowadays, Venerable Master's lectures on Buddhist teachings are broadcast live every day on the Internet. Thanks to high-technology facilities, people in most parts of the world have easy access to the edifications of both the Buddhas and ancient saints. This model of distance education has been adopted by Master as a feasible and efficient way of promulgating moral and religious education in this chaotic world.

Let Compassion and Benevolence Prevail the World Universe

Besides cultivating Buddhism, Venerable Master also studies the scriptures of other major religions solemnly and respectfully. He fully acknowledges that regardless of whether it comes from the east or the west, the sages and saints of every religion all share the same aim in their religious teaching – edifying a person to be “benevolent, philanthropic, sincere, humble and courteous.” He proposes that multi-faith unity will then serve as the fundamental prerequisite for world peace and harmony. Venerable Master suggests that, to encourage cooperation and secure camaraderie among countries, parties and ethnicities, the first approach to start with is to instill the norms of morality and the Law of Cause and Effect into peoples' minds. Hence the harmony and cooperation that is found in every part of a society, such as in governments, parties and ethnic groups, will easily resolve current conflicts.

In recent years, Venerable Master has been invited many times to at



tend international peace conferences and has reported to the ambassadors in UNESCO the effective approach used to resolve conflicts through instilling the masses with morality and the Law of Cause and Effect. However, the audiences were suspicious of Master's words, saying that his approach is ideal but not feasible.

Therefore, in 2005, Venerable Master established the Lu Jiang Chinese Cultural Educational Center in his hometown of Tangchi City in the County of Lu Jiang in China. This was a pilot test used to implement the suggestions he proposed previously at UNESCO.

In the beginning, before the center started teaching, the teachers in the center spent two months practicing Di Zi Gui (Guidelines for Being a Good Person) in their lives. So, before the teachers entered the classroom to impart Confucianism, they had already impressed the local residents as pious and courteous "good men." The teachers' successful implementation of the teachings of Confucius resulted in a fundamental change in the ethos of the people. Within six months, the county became harmonious and the residents became simple and honest. Both the crime rate and divorce rate dropped dramatically. The success of promulgating the teachings of Confucius in Tangchi had proven that people are teachable because everyone is born to be good.

Inspired by this result, many ambassadors in UNESCO restored their confidence of achieving world peace.

In his ripe old age, Venerable Master still works tirelessly and earnestly. Over the previous two decades, Venerable Master has traveled across five continents in order to resolve conflicts and crises in the world, and to secure a world of peace and harmony.

Wherever he goes and whomever he talks to, people around Venerable Master are deeply impressed by his broadmindedness of taking the entire universe into consideration. People are touched by the warmth of his boundless love and compassion, and his fathomless benevolence and wisdom.



釋迦牟尼應化事蹟

眾生皆有佛性應當學習成佛

充滿仇恨與憤怒的苦惱世界是地獄

貪婪慾望與瘋狂的痛苦世界是餓鬼

忘恩負義寡廉鮮恥者的世界是畜生

佛陀為化解三個世界而出生人間



*The Events in the Life of
Buddha Sakyamurni
An agonizing world filled
with hatred and rage is a
world of Hell.*

*A painful world filled with
greed, desires and madness is
a world of Hungry Ghosts.
A world of ungrateful,
dishonorable, corrupt and
shameless people is a world
of Animals.*

*The Buddha was born to
bring reconciliations and
resolutions to these
Three Worlds.*



▲ Ven Master Chin Kung was awarded Honorary Professorship and Doctorate Degree from Griffith University in Aug 2002.



▲ In 2003, Ven Master Chin Kung was awarded Honorary Professorship and Honorary PhD by University of Queensland and Griffith University in Australia.



▲ Ven Master Chin Kung, received the Order of Australia (AM) in Sep 09 from Governor General representing the Queen in recognition of his outstanding contribution in promoting multi-faith harmony.



▲ In Sep 2004, the Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University commended Ven Master Chin Kung for his effort in establishing world peace and conferred an Honorary Doctorate Degree to him, a first for a non-Muslim.

學不厭
教不倦



Study earnestly with unabated perseverance;
teaching tirelessly with endless patience

安身立命創
業興家建國君民禮
義之邦穩定和諧國豐民
安太平盛世長治久安諸佛
報土極樂世界皆以教學
功德成就者也
建國君民教學為先

淨空



Education is of primary importance for self-cultivation to change one's destiny,
for managing a business and a family, for building a country and guiding its people,
for creating a society that is courteous and righteous, for bringing forth social stability and harmony,
for creating wealth and peace for the people, for establishing a glorious era marked by lasting peace,
and even for establishing the lands of Buddhas, for the Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss.

Education is essential in building a country and in guiding its people.

Chin Kung