

Path to True Happiness

*Based on the Work of
Venerable Master Chin Kung*

Permission for reprinting is granted for non-profit use.

Printed 1994

PDF file created by
Amitabha Pureland
<http://www.amtbweb.org.au>

What is Buddhism?

- ✿ Buddhism is the most profound and wholesome education directed by the Buddha toward all people.
- ✿ The content in Buddha Shakyamuni's forty-nine years of teaching describes the true reality of life and the universe. Life refers to oneself, universe refers to our living environment. The teachings directly relate to our own lives and surroundings.
- ✿ Those who possess a complete and proper understanding of life and the universe are called Buddhas or Bodhisattvas. Those who lack the understanding are called ordinary people.
- ✿ Cultivation is changing the way we think, speak, and act toward people and matters from an erroneous way to a proper way.
- ✿ The guideline for cultivation is understanding and awakening, proper views and purity. Understanding and awakening is to be without delusion, proper views is without deviation, and purity is without pollution. This can be achieved by practicing the Three Learnings of self-discipline, concentration, and wisdom.
- ✿ The Three Conditions are the foundation of cultivation and study. When interacting with people, accord with the Six Harmonies and when interacting with society, practice the Six Principles. Follow the ten lessons taught by Samantabhadra Bodhisattva and dedicate one's mind to everlasting purity and brightness. These complete the purpose of the Buddha's teachings.

The Teachings of Venerable Master Chin Kung



- ❁ Buddhism is an education, not a religion. We do not worship the Buddha, we respect him as a teacher. His teachings enable us to escape from suffering and attain happiness.
- ❁ What does Buddha mean? “Buddha” means enlightenment and understanding. Complete understanding is when one realizes the truth about life and the universe. It is when one is apart from all delusions.
- ❁ Cultivation is practiced in our daily life. We should not see it as something unusual, it is simply changing ourselves for the better.
- ❁ To keep our mind pure and at peace is like keeping a pond clean and undisturbed. When the water is clear and still, it can reflect the sky, sun, and trees just as they are, without distortion. Our mind is the same. When we are polluted by greed, anger, and ignorance, and disturbed by discriminations and attachments, we distort our picture of reality and fail to see things as they are. Wrong perceptions of reality can prevent us from enjoying a clear and happy life.
- ❁ Anyone who still harbors arrogance, a self, deters oneself from receiving the true benefits of the Buddha’s teachings.
- ❁ Listen more: speak less.

- ❁ We can learn to turn the light around, reflect upon ourselves, and smooth our mind-pond still. Everything outside of us is non-discriminatory. The garbage does not feel it is unclean and the flower does not know it is fragrant. We must let our mind be at peace and without attachments, this is true happiness.
- ❁ There is a lot of music in our society now that promotes violence, greed, and hatred. To maintain a peaceful mind, we should refrain from listening to these the best we can.
- ❁ What is purity? Purity is apart from defilement. Defilement is the greed, anger and ignorance present in our minds. Cultivation is cleansing these impurities from our hearts.
- ❁ Cultivation is not something unusual, but part of our everyday life. Whenever we recognize and correct our faults, we are cultivating.
- ❁ How do we know when our cultivation has improved? The time comes when we begin to understand the sutras more deeply, when we can read between the lines and realize the true meaning of the Buddha's teachings. This is when our cultivation has improved.
- ❁ Wise people do not just see matters from the surface, they contemplate them thoroughly and see to the truth.
- ❁ To often criticize others is not a good matter. We should instead try to see their good points.

- ❁ “What goes around comes around.” “Treat others the way we would like to be treated.” If we want world peace for future generations and ourselves, we should refrain from erroneous acts and cultivate kindness.
- ❁ To be mindful of the Buddha is to dwell in true wisdom.
- ❁ The ultimate goal to which all methods of cultivation lead is the complete pure and non-discriminatory mind. It is our original nature, our Buddha-nature.
- ❁ Success is reached only after over-coming great obstacles.
- ❁ The Buddha’s teachings should be introduced as an education, not a religion. Using spiritual penetrations and psychic abilities to attract people to believe in Buddhism is not the proper teaching and only serves to mislead others.
- ❁ We should not be afraid to see our faults and mistakes because only then can they be corrected. People who fail to see their own mistakes will not be able to change for the better.
- ❁ A student of the Buddha does not just read Buddhist texts, but studies them to reach a deeper understanding of life and the universe and puts the teachings into practice in everyday life.
- ❁ We would do well to rely upon fellow cultivators to correct our faults. If we cannot accept criticism from others, we will never reach attainment in our cultivation.

- ❁ In putting the teachings into practice, the first thing we should cultivate is the pure heart. The pure heart is a mind without discrimination or attachments. We must also develop proper understanding by listening to lectures on the Buddha's teachings.
- ❁ We should treat all people with respect and sincerity and be responsible for our actions and careful when handling other's property. Be conservative with speech and actions to avoid harming others.
- ❁ Filial piety and respect are the roots of good conduct.
- ❁ It is best to be considerate and kind in our speech. To put down another person is only proving our own arrogance and lack of self-confidence to others.
- ❁ The root of people's sufferings and sicknesses is discrimination and attachment to unrealistic things. The Buddha's teachings tell us how to detach ourselves and not to discriminate. If we listen and practice according to the teachings, we will be at great ease in this world of confusion.
- ❁ The difference between the success and failure of cultivation lies in our learning attitude. We need to be humble, sincere, and respectful and not think we are better than others.
- ❁ To often criticize others is not a good matter. We should instead try to see their good points.

- ❁ Seeing another's fault is the greatest fault in itself.
- ❁ Practicing virtue is to keep a kind heart, speak kind words, and do kind acts to benefit others.
- ❁ Cultivating a sincere, pure, non-discriminatory, great compassionate heart enables one to attain enlightenment.
- ❁ At a place of proper cultivation, everyone is equally important as the Teacher provides guidance and fellow students support each other along the path.
- ❁ Learn to use time wisely. When interacting with people and matters, be clear of what we are going to do from beginning to end and do not waste time. If time is used wisely, there will be plenty of time left to practice diligence.
- ❁ When we live together at a place of proper cultivation, we must be mutually respectful as well as harmonious.
- ❁ A genuine heart is one without discriminations or attachments.
- ❁ We should truly believe in the existence of heaven and hell. If we practice kind deeds, our future will be in heaven. If we commit evil acts, our future will be in hell.
- ❁ The point of practicing giving and charity is to forsake greed, anger, ignorance, and arrogance.

- ❁ The Buddha helps those who have affinity with him. The question of affinity rests in whether the person accepts the teachings or not. The Buddha's compassion and teachings extend over all living beings, just as the sun shines evenly over the great earth. Those who hide in the shade cannot receive the benefits of the sunshine, just as those who cover themselves in ignorance cannot benefit from the Buddha's teachings.
- ❁ When we are jealous of others, we only harm ourselves in the process.
- ❁ Wisdom is essential if we truly wish to propagate the Teachings and benefit living beings. Do not use emotions when helping others, use wisdom and be reasonable. If we use emotions when dealing with people and matters, it often makes a good thing go bad.
- ❁ A wise mind is like a mirror, reflecting and perceiving everything clearly, without distortion.
- ❁ A student of the Buddha strictly abides by the moral codes, the laws of the nation and society, and disciplines himself or herself in the teachings of the Buddha.
- ❁ As our teacher, the Buddha himself took care of the old and sick, and was mindful and ever ready to help all beings in need. The Buddha's conduct showed unconditional compassion, setting a great example for us to follow.

- ❁ Life is short and fragile, why not cultivate kindness instead of committing acts which cause harm to living beings and to oneself?
- ❁ Be constantly mindful of people worried by afflictions and bring forth the heart to help them. Learn to tie good affinities with others and always be friendly.
- ❁ To help others is to help ourselves.
- ❁ To respect others is to respect ourselves.
- ❁ People who deceive others may some-day still feel remorseful and can be saved from hell, but those who deceive themselves have no way of escaping at all.
- ❁ If people would sincerely accrue virtues and practice kind deeds, disasters, and calamities can either be reduced or eliminated depending upon the degree of sincerity and kind deeds practiced.
- ❁ The key to success is diligence.
- ❁ The different methods prescribed by the Buddha come from the different needs of living beings. The methods spring forth naturally from the pure, unwavering heart of the Buddha, without the slightest difficulty.
- ❁ Do not worry over worldly matters.

- ❁ The Pure Land method of cultivation is the most difficult to believe and easiest to practice.
- ❁ Our goal in studying Buddhism and cultivation is to attain complete understanding of life and the universe.
- ❁ A cultivator can be compared to a worm eating its way out of a bamboo tree. When he practices other cultivation methods, he is like a worm eating his way up, taking a long time and tedious effort. If he practices the Pure Land method, it is like he is eating his way sideways through the bamboo. He will attain liberation in a short time with lighter effort.
- ❁ Initially, the Buddha teaches us how to be a good person, and ultimately, a completely understanding being exactly like the Buddha.
- ❁ True virtue and proper conduct are necessary factors in cultivation. If one cannot practice what one teaches, then regardless of how much one knows, they all become useless at the end of his life.
- ❁ Peace of the world is based on peace in the family.
- ❁ Worries arise from the mind. It would be wise to not let things worry us. Nothing and no one can make us worry without our permission.

- ❁ When helping others, we should think about benefiting the entire society or even the world instead of limiting our help to just the ones we love. Expanding the boundaries of our care for others makes our lives more meaningful, full of freedom and happiness.
- ❁ Buddhas and Bodhisattvas treat all living beings as they would treat themselves. Unlike us, they do not discriminate between themselves and others. Their compassion is non-discriminating and they do not expect anything in return for their labors.
- ❁ Disasters appear according to people's thoughts. If we want to turn the tide of destiny, we must first turn our thoughts toward kindness and compassion. We can become vegetarians, refrain from killing to cultivate compassion, and constantly be mindful of the Buddha's teachings.
- ❁ Accord with the people around us. Do not let our personality get in the way of our relationships with other people.
- ❁ Not only, should we be modest when reciting the Buddha's name, we should be modest when doing anything!
- ❁ Everybody is somebody we can learn from. When we see the virtues of others, we should adopt them as our own. When we see the wrongs of others, we should reflect upon ourselves for the same faults.

- ❁ Our hearts find peace when we understand the law of cause and effect: “What goes around, comes around.” We would cease to blame others for our own misfortunes because we would be aware of the fact that we brought it upon ourselves. When our heart is at peace, we develop concentration, and with concentration, wisdom comes forth. Wisdom is the key to changing our lives for the better because for only with wisdom can we see the true reality.

- ❁ If we wish to bring peace to the world, we must start by changing our erroneous ways. World peace stems from inner peace.

- ❁ The ancients often taught of the way to reach attainment through a vase analogy. A conceited cultivator is like a vase filled to the rim with stagnant water, unable to receive a drop of the true teachings. A cultivator who still holds his own stubborn viewpoints is like an unwashed vase, any true teachings given to him would instantly be contaminated. A cultivator who accepts the teachings but does not put it into practice is like a vase with a hole in the bottom, everything it receives just leaks right back out again. We can learn to not only accept the teachings with a pure, humble heart but to truly put them into practice. Only through this way are we really worth the teachings we hold.

- ❁ We must cleanse ourselves of greed, anger, and ignorance. These three poisons are the roots behind all our sufferings.

- ❁ True love is indiscriminating, unattaching, and unconditional, we should share this love with all beings. This is called compassion.
- ❁ Wisdom springs from purity of mind.
- ❁ Living the Buddha's teachings is to fill our lives with utmost wisdom and happiness.
- ❁ In Christianity, faith in God is foremost. In Buddhism, faith in oneself is foremost.
- ❁ We must learn to "let go" and not be too stubborn with our viewpoints. If this goal can be achieved, then we will be at great ease and live a happy, fulfilling life.
- ❁ Sufferings arise due to our unawareness and misunderstandings of our environment and ourselves.
- ❁ It would be wise to be conservative in what we use and be content with what we have.
- ❁ Buddhism is a teaching that shows us how to live a happy, fulfilling and content life.
- ❁ The purpose of the Buddha's teachings is to eradicate superstition and clear up people's misunderstandings about life.

- ❁ It would be wise to remember that our lives are getting shorter by the second.
- ❁ Our goal of cultivation is to attain true happiness. True happiness is undiminishing happiness, withstanding the test of time and conditions.
- ❁ Love can turn into hate. We may dislike something we adored yesterday. We should see things with eyes of equality and not let emotions control our lives.
- ❁ If we learn to forgive, we will dwell in peace of mind.
- ❁ Treat people sincerely. We should mean what we say and truly be sincere from the bottom of our hearts.
- ❁ For the health of our body, we should keep it moving. In taking care of our mind, we should keep it at peace. Exercise and peace of mind are the key to living a happy, fulfilling life.
- ❁ We must be in control of our body and mind, and not let them hinder our ability to enjoy life.
- ❁ Wise people do not harbor feelings of gain or loss. In this way, they often dwell in the joy of possessing great peace of mind.
- ❁ Regardless of what we do, it is best to not give rise to anger.

- ❁ Buddhism is a teaching of wisdom.
- ❁ When we encounter a person or a situation we do not like, it is the perfect opportunity for us to practice patience and cultivate a pure and compassionate heart.
- ❁ A good student of the Buddha is open-minded.
- ❁ We show our gratitude to those who have shown us kindness, such as parents, teachers, and even society. Everyone in society is interdependent and interrelated, thus, we practice good deeds to repay them.
- ❁ True cultivation is reciting Buddha Amitabha's name in modesty.
- ❁ Having hearts like still water in a pond would enable us to reflect the teachings properly. The Buddha is constantly teaching, we cannot hear it because our mind is not still. We would do well to soothe our mind by clearing it of scattered thoughts.
- ❁ How many people recognize the kindness shown by parents? Usually, people do not realize until they themselves become parents or lose their parents. We show our gratitude through practicing filial piety by being responsible, considerate, and compliant to our parent's wishes.
- ❁ We should not simply recite the sutra, but understand the meaning, put it into practice and experience the truth.

- ❁ We truly benefit from the Buddha's teachings when they are put into practice in everyday life.
- ❁ In Buddhism, love is based on wisdom. This is called compassion.
- ❁ To be a poor, content, and happy person is better than being one who is rich, worried, and afflicted with greed.
- ❁ Everything in the Buddha's teachings can be used in everyday life, we would do well to live the teachings and attain true happiness.