



## Inside this Issue

- 1** Zen Festival
- 1** Christmas Trip to Massachusetts
- A Very Happy and Enlightening New Year**
- 2** The Teaching on Patience
- 3** Thousand-Buddha Confession Ceremony
- The Past Buddha of Magnificent Era**
- 4** The Splendence of Dharma Rain
- 5** Coming Events
- 6** The Enlightened Garden
- Rather Be A Fool**

American Zen  
Buddhist Temple  
Vairocana Monastery  
RR3 Box 3361  
Cresco, PA 18326  
Tel & Fax: (570) 895-4600  
Email: [azbt@evenlink.com](mailto:azbt@evenlink.com)  
[www.evenlink.com/~azbtnews](http://www.evenlink.com/~azbtnews)

## Zen Festival

The sound of water dripping off the windows is the echo of melting snow. It is also the ticking of the countdown to the arrival of spring. The passing of this very cold winter will be quickly followed by the wind in March, rain in April and the season of flowers in May. The thought of gratefulness to mothers is particularly special during the season of carnations.

Vairocana Monastery will organize a small festival to help raise funds for our temple on Saturday May 10, 2003 from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. On that day, in addition to various deliciously prepared vegetarian dishes, there will also be a displaying of wide range of fine arts and crafts, Chinese calligraphy, Buddhism accessories, and much more. Please welcome to join us and support this meaningful event.

## Christmas Trip to Massachusetts

Jeannie Chen

During Christmas of 2002, Ven. Ta Yu took a trip to Massachusetts. She led a Diamond Confession Ceremony at Charles and Jeannie Chen's residence to celebrate Christmas. Ben and his wife Bee May also came all the way from Pennsylvania the day before Christmas to join the ceremony.

Although it was a white Christmas,

the ceremony was successfully held as planned. It started at eight thirty in the morning to ensure that everybody could go home right after lunch to avoid being stuck in the snowstorm. There were three sessions. All the attendees sincerely prostrated to over three hundred Buddha. Afterwards, we all enjoyed a nice buffet together to celebrate Christmas.

## A Very Happy and Enlightening New Year

Savas Yavuzkurt

Members of the Buddhist Association of Central Pennsylvania (BACP) had a very happy Chinese New Year and their joy was deepened by an invaluable and important visit by Ven. Ta Yu. I myself found her visits and lectures always enjoyable, thought provoking, calming and enlightening.



On the night of February 1, 2003 BACP had a New Year party at Mr. Keith and Ms. Alice Liu's home, where we all had a great time and attendance at the party by Venerable Ta Yu made this a very special

occasion. The next day Ven. Ta Yu gave a lecture at the BACP attended by many of the members. After the lecture, she patiently and cheerfully answered many questions from the group and many individual questions by some of the members including me.

As usual, her lecture and her answers to questions were down to earth, enjoyable and very informative and did not contain any magical and superstitious concepts. I always found that not only the content of the lectures by Ven. Ta Yu but her manners, her way of talking and relating to the people, her cheerfulness taught me many things that can not be expressed in words easily. Her presence leads one to feel calm and quiet. Her cheerfulness and down to earth attitude and humbleness spreads happiness and humility in our hearts. Ven. Ta Yu although is very young at age, is full of great wisdom and she is a great example for people who wish to get enlightened.

I would like to summarize from my notes the main points of her lecture hoping this would be very helpful to the others also as they were to me. At this point, I would also like to thank my wife Shu-er Lee for her patient translation of the lecture to me as she have always done many years. I hope the paragraphs below represent what Ven. Ta Yu said and I hope I did not make any mistakes in understanding her message. If there are errors in my reporting I would like to apologize now.

Ven. Ta Yu started with a very important point, she told us that "We should apply the principles of Buddhism according to the people's culture and personalities. We should not try to change people and pressure them to change. As an example, she emphasized that we should not pressure our children for

our own sakes and our own wishes. If the time is not mature things will not change. One should have patience and meanwhile should do things the right way."

She also stressed that one's behavior should fit one's declared religion. It is better not to have a named religion but behave and act correctly. Overall message from this part of the lecture was as follows: "Be flexible, be tolerant, do not push, do not be aggressive and most of all do not be a perfectionist."

She continued with a very deep and important statement "One should not look for pure land to live in, instead one should create his/her own pure land."

Other points that she made which left deep impressions on me were "One should not run away but face the problems where they arise. If one does not change oneself, problems will travel with him/her. One should ask oneself; why doesn't good things happen to him/her. One should not just wish but should act."

"One should not just recite the name of Buddha rather one should think and act like him."

These are the main points of the notes I took during her lecture. As I mentioned at the beginning, Ven. Ta Yu's invaluable lecture, her presence and her down to earth cheerful manner taught me and others many concepts that I hope and wish to really understand and act on them over time. I hope I gained a tiny fraction of wisdom from her.

I would like to thank her for myself and for BACP members for her invaluable contributions to our lives. Thank you very much Ven. Ta Yu.

Savas Yavuzkurt  
3/16/2003

*Dr. Savas Yavuzkurt is a professor of Mechanical Engineer at Penn. State University. Thank you so much for sharing your wonderful experience of Ven. Ta Yu's visit at BACP with all of us.*

## The Teaching on Patience

Wendy Wu

We were very delighted to have Ven. Lama Migmar giving the teaching on patience on Sunday, February 9, 2003. Many people came to the temple for this inspiring event.



Ven. Lama Migmar told us during the teaching, "Strong ego leads to strong impulse and desire. Strong impulse and desire lead to aggression. Power and aggression lead to war, while wisdom and patience lead to peace. Take Tibet for an example. Before it became a Buddhist country, it used to raise wars with the neighboring countries. Tibet once attacked China, Nepal, Afghanistan, and Burma. When you raise frequent wars with the neighbors, you end up feeling more insecure and therefore become likely to initiate more attacks because you now become used to the attacking. This is the interdependence of the law that we call Karma. When you attack others you are vulnerable to being attacked. Tibet learned that lesson. After a Buddhist master was invited from India, the people of

Tibet started to practice Buddhism, which became a passage to pacifism for Tibet.”

He continued on, “In our personal practice, patience does not mean hiding from others. Patience is to tolerate and accept various sufferings in our life. If we exercise more impulses and aggression, we will have more sufferings. We can try to bring some transformation to improve the world. However, to improve the environment in the world, we must practice to purify ourselves first.”

Then Ven. Lama Migmar told the story of Milarupa and Sakyamuni Buddha. When Milarupa first went to see his teacher Marlpa, Marlpa didn’t give any teaching to him. Instead he yelled at him and wanted him to build a nine-stage temple on a mountain. Milarupa carried everything on his back to build the temple. After he completed building the temple, he showed it to his teacher. His teacher said that it was not perfect and he needed to destroy the temple and build it again. So Milarupa rebuilt the temple, but his teacher again told him that it was not fine and he again needed to destroy the temple and build it again. Only after telling him to rebuild the temple nine times did Marlpa start the teaching. Marlpa did that because Milarupa had killed many people and committed serious sins. He needed to cleanse these grave karmas of killing, before he could make progress in his practice. After receiving all the teachings from Marlpa, Milarupa retreated to live in a mountain cave to concentrate his practice. He only ate nettles to support his body for the practice. His whole body turned green with all the nettles he ate. He also did not have any clothes to wear. When his sister came to visit him, she was shocked. She asked him why he lived like that, why he

did not wear clothes like others when he practiced, and why he was not like other masters, who lived in a house, traveled with a cart and had many followers. Milarupa sang a meditation song to explain what is real practice and what is worldly practice. Because of his determination and will, Milarupa became the greatest yogi master in Tibet.

Sakyamuni Buddha persevered in his practice for six years under the Bodhi tree with little food and water. Finally, he attained enlightenment and became Buddha. Milarupa and Sakyamuni Buddha could endure all the pain and sufferings because they had a determined mind. If you have a determined mind, you can transform impulsiveness and desire into strength for the practice. If you want to bring transformation to the world, you have to bring transformation first to yourself. Only after you can transform within yourself can the world be transformed. We can also use the sufferings to cultivate the compassion. You need to experience headache before you can understand what headache is. Our own pain and sufferings can help us cultivate more compassion toward others, sustain our diligent practice and reinforce our positive attitude.



Many people asked questions during the questions and answers session. Everybody was energized with Dharma Joy. The teaching on patience was successfully concluded with a delicious vegetarian lunch.

# Thousand-Buddha Confession Ceremony

## The Past Buddha of Magnificent Era

Wendy Wu

On February 22 and 23, 2003 we held the Thousand-Buddha Confession Ceremony at Vairocana Monastery. We prostrated the Thousand-Buddha from the past Magnificent Era. This was the third year of the ceremony since 2001; the program was similar to the one of last year. Each session we prostrated two hundred Buddha. There were a total of five sessions for the entire Thousand-Buddha Confession Ceremony. In order to allow some attendees coming from long distance to arrive home early for work on Monday, the ceremony was successfully ended at 12:30 p.m. on Sunday.



After the grand offering on the first day, Venerable Ta Yu gave a brief teaching based on the Prajnaparamita Sutra of the benevolent king for protection of the nation. She told us that when people asked her: “How to prevent the possible war with Iraq”, she answered: “If there were only 1% of people supporting the government to have war with Iraq, then there wouldn’t be any war. When there are now 35% of people supporting the government to have war with Iraq, the war is likely to take place.”

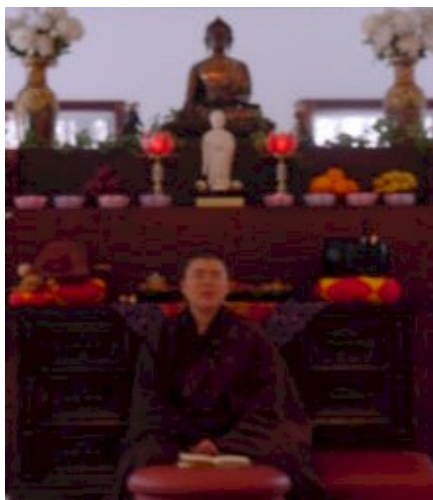
Venerable Ta Yu said: “Depending on what kind of collective Karma that people have, they will produce a president of equal kind to rule their nation.”

She continued the teaching based on the Sutra: “There will be some disorderly phenomena when a nation is about to decline; for example, huge disasters just like the terrorist attack on the world trade center in New York City on September 11, 2001. Over three thousand people died in that disaster. There also will be all kinds of calamities occurring in the nation, such as severe fires, flooding, hurricanes and snowstorms. When a nation is headed toward chaos, the high officers criticize each other, the nature is upset, and sun, moon and stars appear out of time and place. When these calamities occur, we must continue our good practice to face and accept them.”

After lunch, accompanied by sacred chanting, the attendees continued their sincere prostration to the Thousand-Buddha of the Past Magnificent Era. The first day of the Thousand-Buddha Confession Ceremony was completed around 5:00 p.m.

On the second day, Venerable Ta Yu continued the teaching after the grand offering. She told a story from the Sutra of the benevolent king for protection of the nation. There was a prince of Devala named Kalmasapada. He believed in a non-Buddhist master named Shan-Shi, who baptized his head with holy water when he ascended to the throne. Kalmasapada asked master Shan-Shi how to make his kingdom prosperous. Master Shan-Shi told him that he had to kill one thousand kings and use their heads as sacrifice to make offering to the great black heavenly god, Mahakala in order to make his kingdom prosperous. Kalmasapada had

already caught nine hundred and ninety nine kings since he ascended the throne. He only needed one more king to fulfill the sacrifice. Therefore, Kalmasapada traveled ten thousand miles north to search for a king. Finally he found one, whose name was Pu Ming. King Pu Ming asked Kalmasapada to give him one day to worship the Three Jewels and to make food offering to Sanghas before he had to die. Kalmasapada granted his wish.



Following the teaching of all the Buddhas in the past, King Pu Ming offered one hundred superior seats and invited one hundred Buddhist teachers to discourse on the myriad of Gatha of Prajna-paramita twice a day. Hearing the discourse on the Gatha, King Pu Ming perceived and realized the Samadhi of emptiness and understood that body, mind, and kingdom are all unreal. All of his retinue also obtained the Dharm-eye that was able to see the truth and attain liberation from reincarnation.

Afterwards King Pu Ming returned to Devala, the kingdom of Kalmasapada, and prepared to die. He recited the Gatha of Prajna-paramita of all the Buddha in the past to all the kings in Devala, and they all perceived and realized the Samadhi of emptiness. All the kings were now reciting the Gatha of Prajna-paramita. Kalmasapada

asked them what Gatha they were reciting. King Pu Ming answered him that it was the Gatha of Prajna-paramita. Once Kalmasapada learned the Gatha, he also perceived and realized the meditative state of emptiness. Realizing that he had been misled by the non-Buddhist master, he immediately released all the kings back to their kingdoms. Afterwards, Kalmasapada invited Buddhist teachers to discourse the Prajna-paramita for him, became a monk and realized the unmovable truth of no arising and no extinguishing.

All the attendees in the ceremony were full of the joy of Dharma and started the journey home after lunch. The Thousand-Buddha Confession Ceremony was successfully concluded with the enthusiastic participation of all the attendees.

## The Splendent Dharma Rain

On March 9, 2003 Ven. Ta Yu gave the teaching on “Keeping Precepts” or discipline, the second Perfection of “Six Perfections” following the first Perfection, “Giving” last year. Jeannie Chen provided the English translation. All attendees were energized with Dharma Joy.



Ven. Ta Yu told us: “Keeping precepts can protect us from bad Karma. It is also the best way to improve our good personality.

Whether we are keeping perfect precepts is considered directly to our attaining Buddhahood. Therefore, in the Sutra of Bodhisattva's vow, it says that when sentient beings receive Buddha's precepts, they have already entered Buddha's rank."

She further explained the Five Percepts for laypersons on no killing which contains a broad sense. We all know that absolutely no killings of any sorts of sentient beings. In addition, Mahayana emphasizes one should practice compassion and become a vegetarian. Harming any sentient beings either intentionally or unintentionally through our body, speech, and mind costing them the will of living, it is also considered an act of killing. As Buddha's disciples, we must be cautious.



Among the Five Precepts, Venerable Ta Yu also emphasizes no lying. She told us: "Speaking too much often leads to misunderstanding. Being too aggressive often leads to our anxiety. Less words is better than more words and good words is better than less words. We should frequently bear a pure mind in using Dharma speeches to cultivate the good Karma roots in becoming Buddha to benefit oneself and others."

Among all the precepts, do not criticize the mistakes made by Four Disciples is very important. Ven. Ta Yu warns us: "Do not insult the Triple Gems and let ourselves trapped in the serious consequences

of cause and effect. If a disciple makes mistakes, his master will discipline him. If the master himself commits the crime, Buddha will discipline him. The most important thing in practice is to watch our body, speech and mind carefully. Do not follow the winds of ignorance and commit infinite sins, which will keep us in the cycles of Samsara.

After Ven. Ta Yu briefly giving us lectures on important precepts such as "Five Precepts", she further explained the Five Sins, Ten Bad Acts and Four Serious Fundamental Faults to make us understanding the importance of the discipline. She patiently explained all these to remind us to practice the Precepts as the foundation in order to have an easy and solid path.

Understanding the difficulty of keeping the precepts, she compassionately encourages us with convenient ways mentioned in the text. For instance, if you can keep all the Five Precepts mentioned above, you are then considered an accomplished Upasaka or Upasika (male or female Buddhist laypersons). If you are able to keep four precepts, you are then considered a full Upasaka or Upasika. Half Upasaka or Upasika is when you are keeping three precepts. Part Upasaka or Upasika is when you are keeping two precepts. Lastly, initial Upasaka or Upasika is when you are keeping only one precept. We should diligently practice to overcome laziness and carelessness.

The next Dharma talk of the "Six Perfections" will be given by Venerable Ta Yu in July which is about "Endurance". Endurance is such an important practice especially at this present hostile and terrifying world. Please come to join us.

## Coming Events

**Every Tuesday**  
**7:00 p.m.**  
**Group Meditation**  
 Ven. Ta Yu

**4/6/03, Sunday**  
**10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**  
**Patience**  
 Ven. Lama Migmar

**4/26/03, Saturday, 10:00 a.m. –**  
**4/27/03, Sunday, 12:00 p.m.**  
**One-day Zen Retreat**  
 Ven. Ta Yu

**5/10/03, Saturday**  
**11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**  
**Zen Festival**

**5/11/03, Sunday**  
**10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**  
**Sakyamuni Buddha's**  
**Birthday Service**  
 Ven. Ta Yu

**5/26/03, Monday –**  
**5/31/03, Saturday**  
**Spring Cleaning**

**6/21/03, Saturday, 10:00 a.m. –**  
**6/22/03, Sunday, 12:00 p.m.**  
**One-day Pure Land Retreat**  
**(Eight Precepts)**  
 Ven. Ta Yu

**7/6/03, Sunday**  
**10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**  
**Six Perfections - Endurance**  
 Ven. Ta Yu

# The Enlightened Garden

Ven. Ta-Yu

Translated by Jeannie Chen  
Edited by Miin-Ron Lin



## Rather Be A Fool



Earth and Fool took a trip together.

One day, they rested under a big tree. It was a hot summer afternoon. They unconsciously fell asleep in the waves of cool breeze.

In his dream, Earth came to a beautiful island. He saw a magnificent mansion at a far distance. He then walked and walked. Finally, he arrived at a flower garden behind the mansion. In the garden, there were numerous big and tall tea trees blooming beautifully with large red-flowers sized like bowls. Among the red flowers, there stood a tea tree blooming all white-flowers. Driven by curiosity, Earth came under the tea tree with white-flowers and started digging. When he swept away the dirt, he suddenly found a large pot full of shining gold. Earth was so thrilled that he jumped up. The jump woke him up.

Earth told Fool all the details of how he found the gold in his dream. Disappointedly he said that it was no more than a good dream.

Earth's good dream deeply fascinated Fool. He asked Earth to sell the dream to him. After selling his dream, Earth ended the travel and went back to his hometown while Fool was full of anticipation continued his journey.

One day, Fool came to a beautiful island. Surprisingly, he also found a magnificent mansion on the island. Following Earth's description, Fool also found the garden with numerous big and tall tea trees. Unfortunately it was not a blossom season. Therefore there was no way of telling which one was the tea tree with white flowers.

Fool begged the owner to hire him as gardener and patiently waited for the tea trees to blossom.

Finally in the second year that he waited, the tea

trees in the garden started to blossom. However, all the flowers were red none was white.

Year after year, all the tea flowers always turned out red, but Fool did not give up. Instead he worked even harder to wait for the white flowers.

The blossom season came again. Early in the morning, Fool arrived to the garden and was stunned by the scenery in front of his eyes. Among the assembly of huge red flowers like the past years, there stood a tea tree blossom all white-flowers. He dug under the tree and there he found a large pot of gold.

To reward Fool's hard work in the past, the owner gave him the whole pot of gold. He brought the gold back to his hometown and generously donated to charities to benefit his community. He then became a great benefactor who was appreciated by many. On the other hand, Earth who sold his dream remained poor as dirt.

It was long time ago that I heard this story. I was touched by Fool's foolish strength and his spirit to stick to the goal without giving up. If Buddhist practitioners could have this type of hard work and perseverance, then what kind of good vows could not be achieved? Likewise, many of us are more like Earth - we want to try all Eighty-four thousand methods and yet we cannot master a single one. Every day, we dream of reaching Enlightenment as simple as waking up from a dream. Driven by wondering thoughts and desires, we seek those Gurus who claim to be enlightened with supernatural power, like the blinds being led by a blind. Let's ask ourselves: can there be harvest without cultivation?

Because of Fool's spirit, the tea flowers changed color. If Fool can, why cannot we?

