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AZBT Newsletter

A Complete Record of Zen Festival

The sparse dogwood almost vanished in the thick fog in the presumed warm yet cool morning in May.

The sound of wind and rain outside the windows plus a continuous chanting of Buddha name describe the situation at the temple prior to an event. Looking at the cold and raining weather outside after the morning service, everybody felt fortunate that AZBT's first Zen Festival was held yesterday. Yes, it was so lucky! Was it just luck? I believed that it was more because of supporters' sincerity that turned the weather sunny, after raining several days, on the day of the festival to make it successful. Thank the support of the Buddhas, Buddhisattvas and Dharma Protectors, and thank also the efforts made by all good friends. Without your motivation, a lot of things would not have been accomplished.

The proposed plan for the Zen Festival was approved sometime ago at last year's board meeting with Shu-Chuan Huang and Jeannie Chen as the main contacts. The members from BACP (Buddhist Association of Central Pennsylvania) and BALV (Buddhist Association of Lehigh Valley) helped organize the event. The main purpose of Zen Festival was not only to raise money for renovating the temple but also to introduce Buddhism to local people.

At the end of March, the members of BACP attended the Medicine Buddha Confession Ceremony and brought some crafts for sale at Zen Festival.

Connie Liu made parts of the crafts with her clever ideal and artistic hands. Some of the crafts were precious collections of BACP members. After lunch on that day, we discussed some matters that concerned the Zen Festival. It seemed that everything was ready. The only wish was that Buddhisattvas would bless us to have a good weather in the day of festival.

Watching the weather report became one of my daily duties. Lots of people were calling in to request the information. Although, the chance to have a good weather in the day of festival was very slim, however it was impossible to reschedule. At the recommendation of Professor Wenjie Yan of ESU, Mr. Aaron Applegate, a reporter from the famous local newspaper - Pocono Record, visited AZBT to report to the local community. Professor Wenjie Yan donated half of the fee to put an advertisement on the Pocono Record for three days starting from a week before the Zen Festival to promote the event. Meanwhile, we are thankful for Ms. Grace Kao, the reporter of World Journal in Allentown, who wrote an article regarding the Zen Festival at AZBT on the journal.



A scene of Zen Festival

The day before festival Shu-Chuan Huang handed me the entire program list. Bi-Mei Lor also came to the

temple to help out. Simmie Mu from Philadelphia arrived at the temple in the afternoon. She brought a whole case of jade ornaments donated by her friend and goods, such as small and exquisite Buddha statues and Lucky Bamboos, donated by her sister Kim Mu. Jeffrey Huang and Chi-Yen Chiu also came before the evening to help decorate the site prior to the festival. A car drove in while we were talking. It was Steven and Shirley Hsi. They brought along some tables. After dinner, we started to prepare the items to decorate the site. Jeannie Chen, her mother (Mrs. Yuan), sister and younger brother drove a long way from Massachusetts and arrived at the temple around 11:00 p.m. Everybody worked together as a team to mark the price on the items for tomorrow's fundraising until past midnight.

Next day we started to decorate the site after the morning service. Ribbons and balloons lightened up the gray sky. Even those people who were driving by the temple felt the joy in the air and blew the horn to celebrate. Everybody was moving faster when the clock was approaching the starting time. All volunteers' cars were parked on a nearby slope in order to clear the parking lot for visitors. Some people set up the booths and others carefully double checked everything. Everyone was busying but did not forget to look at the sky and prayed that nothing fall from the sky.

While others were busy outside, the volunteers inside the temple did not rest. Mrs. Yuan, Benny and Bi-Mei Lor were preparing the lunch for the volunteers. In a corner of the kitchen, Alice Liu was busy putting final touch on the spring rolls. The crispy and delicious spring rolls next to the tea eggs presented a hard choice for people. Tong-Shya Ko's famous fried rice noodle also was available at the temple. She was accompanied by Yih-Shyong Ko M.D. and Dominic Lu D.D.S. whom I have not seen for a long time. They worked together with Chau-Fe Huang M.D. to provide free checkup for blood pressure and free

advices on dental care. It was really a blessing to everyone.

The festival started at 11:00 a.m., visitors were on their heels to the festival. Besides the delicious Chinese vegetarian food, we also arranged several volunteers who were good at both Buddhism and English to be the event guides for Zen Festival. Wei-Ting Yu and Jeffrey Huang introduced the Buddhism and gave out the Buddhist books. Miin-Ron Lin, Wilma Yau, and Grace Chan led the tour to the Buddha Hall. The visitors were impressed by the adornment and purity of the Buddhism. A graduate student from Penn State, assisted by her schoolmate Shi-Jung Lai, demonstrated Chinese calligraphy in front of the public. They were popular with the visitors in translating and writing their English names into Chinese calligraphy.

A shadow attracted our attention. It was Professor Savas from Penn State, the handyman of the day. He repaired some windows and doors of the temple during the festival. Working together with Professor Kenneth Kuo and Wan-Shu Chang, three of them directed the stream water into the lake. They had accumulated numerous merits by doing those works.



A picture of volunteers at AZBT's Zen Festival Fundraising

The weather was cool and only got hot in the afternoon. Thirty? Don't worry. We had Emily Yau, the youngest volunteer, providing us fresh lemonade. The festival was completed at 3:00 p.m. All the volunteers gathered and took pictures for souvenir and drew a successful rest note for the first Zen Festival.

Bathing Buddha Ceremony

Wendy Wu

American Zen Buddhist Temple held a Bathing Buddha Ceremony on May 11 at the Vairocana Monastery to celebrate Sakyamuni Buddha's birthday. The attendees came from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Massachusetts, including some meditation class members from the local areas. The Buddha Hall was full of people. A large bowl decorated with colorful flowers was arranged on the bathing Buddha table. The atmosphere was glorious and peaceful.



Chanting Sakyamuni Buddha's name and circling the Buddha

Before the Bathing Buddha Ceremony, Venerable Ta Yu explained its meaning to everyone: "The reason why we carry out the Bathing Buddha Ceremony on Sakyamuni Buddha's birthday is not because Buddha needs to take a bath. It is because we need to purify our bodies, speech, and mind. Buddha is an enlightened Sage. His body, speech, and mind are already pure and clean. Yet we, the future Buddhas currently as sentient beings, still have delusion and defilement. Therefore, we intend to purify sentient beings' bodies, speech, and mind by means of bathing the Buddha."

Venerable Ta Yu continued on to teach us how to bathe the Buddha: "When we bathe the Buddha, we should not shower the Buddha statue on the top of the head. We should shower on the left shoulder. When we

start to chant the Bathing Buddha Gatha, please come forward one by one to the bathing Buddha table. Join your palms to bow then kneel down in front of the bathing Buddha table. Fill the spoon with water from the bowl and shower on the left shoulder of the Buddha statue three times. Afterwards, stand up, Join your palms to bow again and return to your seat.”

The ceremony was conducted in two languages. In each section, we recited the Bathing Buddha Text in English first, followed by the traditional Chinese Buddhist Chanting. Venerable Ta Yu led all the attendees to chant the Praise of Bathing Buddha, the Praise of Buddha, and the name of Sakyamuni Buddha and to circle the Buddha in the ceremony. When the Buddhist hymn of Bathing Buddha Gatha started, the attendees came one by one to the bathing Buddha table and sincerely bathed the Buddha.



The attendees one by one sincerely bathing the Buddha

The Bathing Buddha Ceremony was followed by the Grand Meal Offering. Filled with Dharma joy, every one enjoyed a delicious vegetarian buffet as a successful completion of the ceremony.

The Visit of ESU Students

In the afternoon of March 27, Professor Wenjie Yan led a group of more than twenty students from the East Stroudsburg University to visit the AZBT - Vairocana Monastery. During the visit, they were given a

brief introduction to Buddhism, a meditation class, and a Question and Answer session.

One student asked: “Does Buddhism believe in the existence of Heaven?”

“Yes, Buddhism believes the existence of Heaven. But, Heaven is just one of the six realms. The six realms include three good realms – Heaven, Human, and Demigod, and three bad realms – Animal, Ghost, and Hell. Although Heaven is a very joyful place to live in, it is still one of the six realms of cyclic existence and it is not ultimate or eternal. Once you consume all the heavenly merits, you will fall down to a lower realm, like a millionaire who has lots of money in the bank and wants all fun but no work. Once he spent all the money, he then become homeless. Buddhism teaches people to practice diligently so that everyone can achieve the ultimate perfection and be liberated from the suffering and rebirth in the six realms of cyclic existence. ”

Another student asked: “Why is our life suffering?”

“The Buddha taught us that there are eight common sufferings in our life. They are the sufferings from birth, aging, sickness, death, the activities of Five Aggregates (matter, sensation, conception, formation and consciousness), parting from the person or thing we love, meeting with the person or thing that we hate, and not receiving what one seeks – disappointed hope or unrewarded effort. These are the sufferings that can be described by words, not to mention those never ending indescribable sufferings. How can we say life is not suffering? ”

The other student asked: “How to become a Buddhist?”

“The basic requirement is taking the Three Refuges (in Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha) and receiving Five Precepts (no killing, no stealing, no adultery, no lying, and no intoxication) in front of the Three Jewels (Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha) as a proof of becoming a

Buddhist. For those who do not want to take refuges, even though they can discuss or preach the Buddha Dharma, they are only interested in Buddhism but not qualified to be a Buddhist yet.”

Looking at these young Americans who had the circumstances to connect with Buddhism, one would hopefully think that a bright future of spreading Buddha Dharma in the western world would be coming soon.

Medicine Buddha Confession Ceremony

Wei-Ting Yu

Peaceful Light

At the start, Venerable Ta Yu compassionately welcomed everyone back to participate in today’s ceremony. She told us that on top of the altar there were peace candles especially lit for President Bush and other world leaders, the servicemen and servicewomen who had sacrificed, and those innocent civilians who were caught in the crossfire during the war. The wish is to use Medicine Buddha’s precious crystal light to expand the wisdom of our world leaders and to reduce or eradicate warfare and calamities. In additions, Venerable Ta Yu meticulously prepared and lit one hundred delicate candles individually tagged with names for approximately twenty participants and other Dharma supporters, wishing everyone to receive a blessing of wisdom. Today’s ceremony was led off by conducting an Avalokitesvara Purifying Service. After the completion of the first part of the confession service and the Grand Meal Offering, Venerable Ta Yu made a brief yet meaningful Dharma speech.

Magnific Adornment Grows Reverence

Venerable Ta Yu informed us about the newly arrived Avalokitesvara

(Great Compassionate Bodhisattva) statue that was just acquired in Philadelphia last night. She recalled her visit on that day to a Buddhist shop, "Wow, so many Buddha and Bodhisattva statues, big and small!" Shop owner asked her which one she would prefer. Her reply was she likes them all because she does not want to manifest a distinguishing mentality. However at the end, she selected this plain but elegant and magnificent Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva.

Venerable Ta Yu continued on with a story about her monk brothers to remind us that before mortals have attained Buddhahood, we are all still prone to distinguishing perceptions. Therefore, we need the dignified monastery to inspire our reverent minds.

Venerable Ta Yu recalled she has a monk brother who is extremely eloquent and articulate in giving Dharma speeches. Although he is excellent in all aspects, however; he looks as if he has a serious case of liver illness due to his tall, slender, and dark complexion. Yet despite the physical appearances, he is in excellent health. One day while he and another monk brother were at a gas station refilling fuel, he was being criticized by a nearby customer with his friend, "How does this monastic person looking so pale as if he is malnourished, I'm telling you being a monk is no good!" Ironically when the other monk got out of the car from the other side, he was also judged. He is naturally well rounded, looking just like the Maitreya Bodhisattva (Lucky Buddha) with his abundant belly. The man said, "I'm telling you, what a monastic person does is eat, no work and no productivity, that's why he's so plump..." Then this monk calmly responded to his criticism, "Dear sir, being a monastic person is the toughest career among the three hundred sixty professions. We are being criticized for being too fat or too thin. Our physical appearances must be maintained in perfect shape..."

What Venerable Ta Yu meant was that being a monastic person, one has to maintain magnificent poise at all times to eliminate defamatory remarks and help inspire reverence in other people. As a Buddhist disciple, I think perhaps that's why Mahayana Buddhism strenuously emphasizes on poise and dignified gestures.



The beginning of the Medicine Buddha Confession Ceremony

Where Should Those In Western Pure-land Go?

Venerable Ta Yu asked us a very interesting question, "In the past, an ancient Patriarch had said everyone wants to attain the Western Pure-land. Then, what about those in the Western Pure-land, where should they go?"

This is to remind us why we must confess, prostrate, recite Sutra and Mantra, and perform services and rituals. Sutra describes that, "Without heavy Karma, we would not have been born in this Saha (muddy) World." Who can claim to possess no iniquity or Karmic obstructions? Therefore, we must be diligent and vigorous in prostrating and confessing to dissolve our karmic obstructions. Through these various services and Buddhist practices, we are able to connect with Buddha in those short periods every day to purify our Karma arising from Body, Speech, and Mind. Upon the completion of cleaning up the above Three Karma, it will be easy and straightforward to advance to the Eastern (Medicine Buddha's) Crystal Pure-land, Maitreya's (Pure-land) Heavenly Inner Palace, or Western (Amitabha's) Paradise Pure-land.

Misfortune or Good Fortune Does Not Come by Itself --- One Brings It Upon Oneself

Venerable Ta Yu spent a lot of time explaining to us the Medicine Buddha Sutra, which advises that offering banner and lamp for prolonging life and cultivating innumerable merits can prevent the first of the nine types of unexpected and tragic deaths. According to Liberate Bodhisattva, "Some living beings become only mildly ill but can find neither medication nor doctor; some are seen by a doctor but are misdiagnosed and mistreated and end up unnecessarily in tragic and unexpected death." Recently there are numerous cases of medical negligence that resulted in the tragic and unexpected death of patients.

Continuing on, Venerable Ta Yu emphasized that we lay men/women (who practice Buddhists at home) are naturally curious and interested in psychic reading or fortune telling, anxiously wanting to learn about our future and the unknowns. What kind of problems could this lead to and why it is not related to the Buddhism? She used Buddha's sympathetic advice to remind us. According to the Sutra, "The belief in evil spirit and malicious cult advocates and their false view of what's good and bad, can incite fear, impurify and disturb the mind. The desire to seek fortune and longevity by forestalling future misfortunes and slaughtering all kinds of living beings for offering to conjure spirits would never be attained. Ignorance, delusion, and belief in evil concept can only damn one to tragic death in Hell with no way out. This is called the preliminary tragic."

The phrases from the Sutra clearly point out our vulnerabilities. We have many fears: fear of losing all our presently owned wealth and other possessions, fear of the unknowns, fear of the consequences of our Karma, and fear of facing our Karmic consequences and truly eliminating them. Immoral advocates are able to

manipulate our fear and easily control our minds. They often befuddle us with seemingly charity activities just to gain our trusts and faith. However, after we closely examine their motives, we'll discover these so-called "good people or entities" who proclaim to help us resolve our problems, only seek our money. At the end, we'll be defrauded a significant fortune for their personal financial gains and interests. Even worse scenario would be the loss of both money and sexuality.



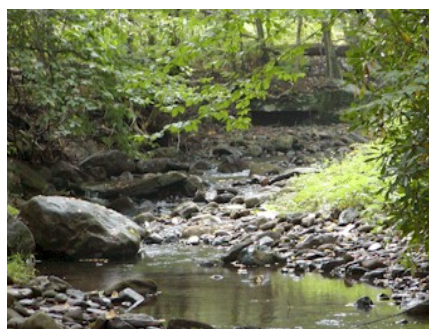
The attendees sincerely prostrating to the Buddha

Venerable Ta Yu made a very explicit example. She noted what Buddhism teaches us is like drinking plain water. Naturally fresh, clean water has no taste or flavor yet it's most healthy and thirst quenching for our body. On the other hand, believing in some supernatural psychic reading to solve our problems is like drinking icy Coke. When it's first taken, it is very delicious and cool, and we feel good instantly. However, with all its chemicals, artificial colors, and sugar, it's unhealthy for our body and the more we drink, the thirstier we get.

Venerable Ta Yu pointed out another case. In a temple where she used to live, there was a psychic and fortune-telling woman that once passed by. Her eyes were peculiarly dislocated. One eye looked up at people whom she ran across; another looked down at ghosts and the deads. In actuality, the more she conducted her psychic business, the more ghosts and spirits she'd be connected with. These psychic readers do not need to practice in order to generate any supernatural power. All they need is

to create more Karma to have more ghost's power. They're naturally and easily linked to ghosts and spirits because they just got out of the Ghost Realm to be reborn as humans. Therefore, ghost's instinct and characteristics still somewhat exist in them.

We should be truthful in our practices, taking one step at a time, and respectfully following what Buddha teaches us to truly face all phenomena arising from causes and conditions and we should diligently confess in order to clean up our accumulated Karma. Oppositely, if we seek supernatural psychic power by connecting with ghosts, then as it's said, "it is easy to invite them in but tough to send them away" because of their strong attachment in the Ghost Realm. Our one time desire to be connected with ghosts can leave us with numerous and endless troubles. Venerable Ta Yu had sympathetically advised us not to desire any supernatural power in our practices (actually most of time it's coming from connecting with ghosts). It is for this very reason during the time of Buddha that if his disciples exhibited any supernatural power, he would ask them to suppress them completely!



The beautiful Paradise Stream running through Vairocana Monastery

Lastly, Venerable Ta Yu encourages us that as Buddhists, we should work on our patience and perseverance. Residing in this disturbing and unsettling environment today, our bad states of mind often create boundless animosity and bad karma. When a typical person first learns to meditate, after failing to persevere for five minutes and with his initial

confidence and faith shaken, he would ask Venerable Ta Yu whether there is a quicker, more relaxed, and easier method. Venerable Ta Yu used this instance to inspire us all to work at our patience in order to endure in our practice.

As the completion of the ceremony, Venerable Ta Yu wishes everyone to use compassion and wisdom as Dharma remedy and cultivate diligently. She wished all be well and propitious.

The Teaching on One-day Zen Retreat

Wendy Wu

The first One-day Zen Retreat of this year started at 10:00 a.m. on May 26 and concluded at noon on May 27. Venerable Ta Yu gave a profound and stimulating teaching to the attendees at the retreat.

Some people said that practicing Zen is very difficult because it talks about instant enlightenment. Yet, a typical person without certain instinct cannot even achieve the gradual enlightenment taught by Master Shen-Shao. Therefore, many people practice with different methods of other sects. This is the reason why Pure-land is very popular and prosperous. Even an uneducated old lady who doesn't know how to read and write can recite Amitabha's name and practice Pure-land. Amitabha Sutra describes the magnificent Western Paradise Pure-land adorned with Seven Jewels Lotus Pond and Pure Gold Ground, which attract many people wishing to be born there. To the people living in this degenerating era of Buddha Dharma, practicing Amitabha's Pure-land is thought to be the safest and fastest way among all methods. Some people say that they can only recite Amitabha's name because their instinct is not good enough and when they can recite Amitabha with a clear

and concentrated mind for seven days, they will be able to reach the Western Paradise Pure-land. However, it is really not easy to maintain a clear and concentrated mind while reciting Amitabha. A practitioner should not give up and look down upon oneself. Those who have so-called bad instinct may well be the first one to get enlightened and achieve Buddhahood. A practitioner should not be arrogant and look down upon others. A person who was looked down upon by you may become a Buddha before you. If you have bad connection with him/her you might lose any chance to receive his/her teaching when he/she becomes a Buddha. A practitioner should not become negligent, should practice diligently every day in order to avoid failure because of procrastination.

When we practice, we should search the fundamental issue. The doctrine of Zen sect talks about pointing directly to our mind and attaining Buddhahood by seeing the nature of mind. Amitabha's Pure-land method also emphasizes the reciting of Buddha's name until reaching a clear and concentrated mind. Every method is inseparable from the mind. Mind is the origin of practice. We should start our practice from the origin that is the purification of our mind.



Venerable Ta Yu reading attendees' reports at the end of the retreat

When Master Da Zhu Hui Hai came to learn with Zen Master Ma Zu Dao Yi, Master Ma Zu asked him, "Why do you come here to visit me?" Master Hui Hai replied, "I am here to seek Dharma. Please help me to settle my mind." Master Ma Zu said, "I have nothing here. What Buddha Dharma do you want? Why do you abandon your own treasure and leave home to wander? What are you doing?" Master Hui Hai asked, "What is Hui Hai's treasure?" Master Ma Zu answered, "The one that asks me right now is your treasure. You already have everything. You don't need to acquire anything from outside." As soon as Master Hui Hai heard what Master Ma Zu said, he was enlightened instantly. After the enlightenment, Master Hui Hai stayed with Master Ma Zu for six years. After six years he went back to his old master and wrote a commentary named "The Key to Instant Enlightenment and Entering the Path". Someone brought that commentary to Master Ma Zu. After Master Ma Zu read it, he told his disciples that, "There is a large and brilliant pearl (Da Zhu) in Yue Zhou (the county where Da Zhu residing). Da Zhu is liberated."

The main purpose of "The Key to Instant Enlightenment and Entering the Path" is to show us how to discover the inner treasure in our mind. This book mentions that instant enlightenment is the only way to liberation. What is instant enlightenment? Instant means to clear up all false thoughts instantly. Enlightenment means to perceive that nothing is obtainable. If you can meditate for twenty-four hours without having any wandering thoughts, then you have entered a tranquil state (Samadhi). There are great and tiny Samadhi. Reaching Samadhi does not mean you are liberated but it will help us on practicing liberation. We should practice from the origin, which is our mind. If your practice did not reach certain level, you will end up in the transmigration in the six realms after

Coming Events

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

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

8/3/03, Sunday
10 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Six Perfections
- Diligence
Ven. Ta Yu

9/14/03, Sunday
10 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Six Perfections
- Concentration
Ven. Ta Yu

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

10/25/03, Saturday, 10 a.m. –
10/26/03, Sunday, 12 p.m.
One-day Zen Retreat
Ven. Ta Yu

you die. How do we know mind is the origin? Lankavatarasutra said, "When our mind arises, all Dharma (phenomena) arises. When our mind ceases, all Dharma (phenomena) ceases." Thus, mind is the origin of all. If we can cultivate our mind to make it pure, then we become Buddha. A wise person tames his mind, not his body. When our mind is well tamed, our body is tamed as well.

Although the foundation of practice is not to seek or obtain, there will be no driving force if we do not want to pursue or gain anything in the course of our practice. However in our seeking and obtaining we need to realize that nothing is permanent so that we will not develop attachments to all the Dharma. If we do not want

to pursue or gain anything from the practice, we could easily fall into "Ignorant Nothingness" and get lost in a demonic state.

Each one of us has a brilliant pearl, but we don't know how to take it out and use it, while we constantly search outside. Buddha said, "Do not pursue Buddha far away at Vulture Peak. Vulture Peak resides within your mind. Everybody has a Stupa at Vulture Peak. Everyone should quickly practice beneath that Stupa." Many people say they want to go to India on a pilgrimage, especially to visit the Spiritual Vulture Peak. Because Buddha expounded many doctrines on Vulture Peak, they could accumulate a lot of merit if they worship, practice or recite Sutra on

Vulture Peak. Vulture Peak is not sacrosanct in itself, Buddha Dharma made Vulture Peak sacrosanct. Therefore, not every one has to go on a pilgrimage to Vulture Peak.

You ought to have awareness when you practice Zen. It's better to be aware that you have wandering thoughts than if you are not. To meditate (practice Dhyana) is to cultivate Samadhi. Then what is Samadhi? Dhyana is to extinguish false thoughts. Samadhi is to see the Buddha nature within oneself. Meditation can make our mind clearer and clearer. We know how to face and handle things when our mind is clear. Meditation allows us to attain Samadhi. Through Samadhi, we are able to unfold our wisdom.

The Enlightened Garden

Ven. Ta-Yu

Translated by Jeannie Chen

Edited by Miin-Ron Lin

It Is Not A Story

It is not a story; it is a true case among the numerous social problems hidden under an iceberg.

She, a juvenile, went through a miserable life. A sense of hopelessness and sorrow filled her face with gloom. The magic power of youth vanished from her young body.

"What I want is an answer. But even I myself do not know what the right answer is." She spoke depressingly.

On the screen appeared an adorable baby with innocent eyes revealing a panicking fear that is heart breaking.

"I am so sorry for my baby. She is innocent."

Yes, the baby is innocent. This scene with five men and a baby not resembling any of them befuddled the audience. Five candidates, one by one, came up to the stage. Nobody was willing to admit that he is the father of the baby. Their heated mutual accusations bombarded us with force like the American bombs dropped in Afghanistan without cease. Their dirty words and violent gestures wiped out any trace of loving and romantic times in the past. With none of them willing to take the responsibility, DNA test was the only way to determine.

One day later, DNA test results came out.

The answer revealed that no one among these five men was the baby's father. A sense of shame and hopelessness left her in tears. No matter how the talk-

show host comforted her, there was no way to heal the injury in her heart - the everlasting hurt. Holding the innocent baby she did not know how to face her future.

It is both fortunate and unfortunate to live in the highly developed twenty-first century. The technology provides us a comfortable, convenient, and enjoyable life. However the material wealth and indulgence also produces countless social problems. The tragic stories of a decline in the public morals repeat one after another. The next generation was born out of abnormal relationship. When they grow up, they themselves likely become the source of social problems.

Buddhism preaches the protection of spiritual environment and emphasizes the cultivation of moral conducts. The compassionate Buddha understands the problems of sentient beings and gives us many keys to the solutions. Buddhism emphasizes in keeping precepts as a method to guard our merit. The principle of keeping precepts is to guide our daily activities, such as walking, standing, sitting, and sleeping to avoid the improper thoughts and actions that like fire harming others and ourselves. We need to be constantly aware of our thoughts in order to benefit ourselves and others until reaching perfection.

Bodhisattvas fear the cause and sentient beings fear consequence. Before we do anything, why don't we pause and think carefully to avoid becoming the main character of another tragedy.