

# WORDS OF WISDOM

*(Excerpts from Buddhist Sutras, teachings of Great Masters and the Wise)*

## **Attitude in Learning Buddhism**

“My teaching is not to come and believe but to come, see and practice.” *(Buddha)*

“Do not go by revelation or tradition, do not go by rumour, or the sacred scriptures, do not go by hearsay or mere logic, do not go by bias towards a notion or by another person’s seeming ability and do not go by the idea “He is our teacher”. But when you yourself know that a thing is good, that it is not blameable, that it is praised by the wise and when practiced and observed that it leads to happiness, and then follow that thing.” *(Buddha)*

## **Entry to Buddhism**

“There are many ways to enter upon the Buddhist path, not just one way. The way that you choose will depend upon your interests and inclinations. There are, however, two things that must be present in whichever way you choose; the first is sincerity and the second is reverence. This fact will never change until the end of time. Anyone who wants to make progress toward enlightenment must understand this. If this is not understood, you will be like a tree without roots or a bird without wings. And if this is so, how can you ever expect to grow or to fly?”

*(Master Yin Kuang)*

## **A True Buddhist**

A Buddhist should be recognized by his moral character – thought, word and action. One who has thoroughly purified oneself with good thoughts, good words and good deeds is a perfect Buddhist from the Buddhist point of view.

It is difficult to regard a person as a Buddhist, if he merely goes to a place of worship and prays only for the good of himself and his family, with little regards for others.

The idea of the Buddha exceeds divine power; you are in charge of your own destiny.

The idea of pure land can achieve the ideal of human rights; foster the state of equality.

If you can enjoy the Buddha’s teachings, you can resolve things.

If you observe the Buddha’s teachings, you can live at ease. *(Ven. Master Hsing Yun)*

“A truly cultivated person never sees the fault of others.”

*(Master Hui Neng, the sixth Patriarch of Ch’an)*

- In seeing the faults of others, we should behave like a blind person.
- In hearing unjust criticism of others, we should behave like a deaf person.
- In speaking ill of others, we should behave like a dumb person.
- It is not possible to put a stop to false accusations, reports and rumours.

*(Buddha)*

## **A Religion of Peace**

Buddhism has taught peace among its followers more effectively, during all its history, than has other religious faith because Buddhism is the only religion with no bloodshed or violence.

*(Rev. J.T. Sunderland)*

The practice of restraint of thought brings peace and harmony to the individual, and restraint of speech and bodily actions gives peace to others. It is through the mind that all evil or unwholesome actions are performed. If this mind within is well-guarded with attentiveness, then wars and conflicts without would naturally be kept in check.

True Blessings is knowing how to be satisfied with whatever one has is the ultimate refuge of peace and security. One who knows how to be satisfied with whatever he has can lie anywhere on the ground and feel completely contented. One who does not know how to be satisfied with what he has will feel that something is lacking even if he is in heaven; one, like this, is poor even though he may possess enormous wealth. One, like this, finds only entanglement and suffering in the operation of his senses, while one who knows how to be satisfied finds only comfort and joy in them. *(The Sutra of Bequeathed Teachings)*

## **True Faith**

Faith is the source of the way and the mother of all virtue and merit. It increases all virtue and eradicates all doubt. It is the beginning of the supreme way. *(Avatamsaka Sutra)*

The essence of faith lies in belief in the reality of the Buddha's existence, in belief in the virtue of the Buddha, and in belief in the power of the Buddha. It also lies in the deep appreciation of the practitioner, in the joy of the practitioner, in the desire for enlightenment of the practitioner, and in the purity of mind of the practitioner. Faith inspires one to find delight in goodness.

*(Vijnaptimatratasiddhi Sastra)*

The avoidance of all evil, the accumulation of the good, and the purification of one's mind this is the teachings of all Buddhas. *(Buddha)*.

**Right Effort** is the persevering endeavour

- To prevent the arising of evil and unwholesome thought that has not yet arisen in a man's mind;
- To discard such evil thoughts already arisen;
- To produce and develop wholesome thoughts not yet arisen;
- To promote and maintain the good thoughts already present (*Buddha*)
- Giving up false speech, he becomes a speaker of truth, reliable, trustworthy, and a non deceiver of the world.
- Giving up malicious speech, he does not repeat what he has heard in order to cause bickering between people. He reconciles those who are divided and brings closer those who are divided and brings closer those who are already friends.
- Giving up harsh speech, his speech is blameless, pleasing to the ear, agreeable, going straight to the heart and liked by most.
- Giving up idle chatter, he speaks at the right time what is correct and to the point, about Dharma and about discipline. He speaks words worth being treasured, opportune, reasonable, well defined and to the point. (*Buddha*)

### **Law of Cause and Effect**

According to the seed that is sown so is the fruit ye reap there from, Doers of good will gather good, Doers of evil will reap evil. Sown is the seed, and thou shalt taste, the fruit thereof. (*Buddha*)

Good begets good and bad begets bad. We are the results of what we were, and we will be the results of what we are. (*Buddha*)

All events in the universe have Causes and Conditions. The success or failure of any event is brought about by causes and conditions. Though there may appear to be a person outside of me who brings about the success or failure of something that I do, the truth is all events that impinge upon me are brought about by causes that I myself created sometime in the past. The appearance that some other person is doing something to me is just that it is just an appearance. If this point is well understood, one can be joyful and content at all times and one will not feel any resentment or any need to complain. (*Master Yin Kuang*)

### **Karma (deed)**

Karma is like the wind. Good karma blows sentient beings toward good places where they will experience joy. Bad karma blows sentient beings toward bad places where they will experience suffering. (*Explanation of the Mahayana*)

The power of karma is incredible; it exerts its influence over great distances. When the fruit of retribution have ripened, there is nowhere you can hide. (*Collection of Rules*)

All bad karma that I created in the past was created from beginningless greed, anger or ignorance. It was born from acts of body, mouth or mind. And now I repent it all. (*Sutra*)

- The greatest virtue is that gained in the cultivation of universal love.
- The supreme happiness is the happiness derived from mental tranquillity.
- The absolute truth is the truth acquired through the understanding of the causes of human suffering.
- The highest religion is the religion that teaches intellectual development, morality and mental purification.
- The greatest philosophy is the philosophy that introduces a practical way of life which can be followed without depending on theories and mere beliefs. (*Buddha*)

### **The Best Good Luck**

Being deeply learned and skilled; being well-trained and using well-spoken words; this is the best good luck.

- To support parents, to cherish a spouse and child and to adhere to a simple livelihood; this is the best good luck.
- Being generous, just, helping one's relatives and being blameless in one's actions; this is the best good luck.
- To refrain from evil and from strong drink, and to be always steadfast in virtue; this is the best good luck.
- Reverence, humility, contentment, gratitude and hearing the good Dharma; this is the best good luck. (*Buddha*)

Wherever the Buddha's teachings have flourished, either in cities or countryside, people would gain inconceivable benefits. The land and people would be enveloped in peace. The sun and moon would shine clear and bright. Wind and rain would appear accordingly, and there would be no disasters. Nation would be prosperous and there would be no use for soldiers or weapons. People would abide by morality and in accordance with the law. They would be courteous and humble, injustices would be eradicated and everyone would be content. There would be no thefts or violence. The strong would not dominate the weak and everyone would get their fair share. (*The infinity of Life Sutra*)

### **The Three Dharma Seals**

- *The Truth of Impermanence* – “That which is gathered together must scatter apart, and that which is high must fall down, and those who become companions must separate, and that which is born must die.” (*Agamas*)
- *The Truth of No Self-Nature* – All things are devoid of a self-nature and depend on other things for their existence.
- *The Truth of Nirvana* – Nirvana is the ultimate refuge. It is the true self and the Buddha nature we seek. It is the extinction of suffering, elimination of egoism, and the eradication of

lust, hatred and ignorance.

### **Dependent Originations**

Because of ignorance arise volitional (intentional) activities.

Because of volitional activities arise consciousness.

Because of consciousness arises mind and matter.

Because of mind and matter arise six senses.

Because of six senses arise contact.

Because of contact arises craving.

Because of craving arises attachment.

Because of attachment arise karma conditions.

Because of karma conditions arises birth.

Because of birth arises old age and death.

*(Buddha)*

### **“Life is uncertain – Death is certain”**

“Your property will remain when you die. Your friends and relatives will follow you up to your grave. But only good and bad actions you have done during your life-time will follow you beyond the grave.”

“Your wealth can decorate only your house but not you. Only your own virtue can decorate you. Your dress can decorate your body but not you. Only your good conduct can decorate you.”

*(Buddha)*

### **Life is impermanent. All forms are illusions**

“All conditioned dharmas are like dreams, like illusions, like bubbles, like shadows, like dew, like lightning, and all of them should be contemplated in this way.”

“One should disentangle himself from all marks, and commit himself to the highest complete enlightenment; he should not give rise to a mind based on form, and a mind based on sound, smell, taste, touch, or thought. He should give rise to a mind that is not attached to anything.”

*(Diamond Sutra)*

### **Mind**

“Use your mind to overcome your mind. If the mind becomes scattered and races off on its own, calmly bring it back to itself and contemplate that there is nothing beyond the mind.”

*(Awakening of Faith in Mahayana)*

“How should we purify the tendencies of our minds? Through deep introspection, contemplate the fact that the source of all good and all evil is nothing more or less than the mind itself. A single wicked thought can produce a plethora of evil consequences, while a single good thought can give birth to a wealth of good things.” *(Master Yung Chia)*

## **Emptiness of all things**

“If you can truly get beyond attachment and the need to constantly cling to distinctions, and if you realize that the purity or impurity of all things are just relative conditions, then you will be in a position to understand that nothing has an absolute wisdom, or absolute knowledge, or absolute being, or absolute non-being. Ultimate truth is beyond words. The Tathagata used words to describe this truth only because he wanted to teach sentient beings about it. If we cling to the meaning of words, they will increase our delusion and we will not see the truth.”

*(Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana)*