

## 佛學問答

## Questions on Buddhism

解答者：李炳南居士

Answered by Mr. P. N. Li

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Translated by Rr. H. Y. Li

**Q.** If I break the precepts intentionally and then never do it again, but do good things such as to print Sutras, to spread the Dharma and to make Buddha images, and turn these influence of the deeds for the repentance, can these cancel the sin?

**A.** If you do some thing wrong unintentionally, it is a mistake. If you do some thing wrong intentionally, it is a sin. Though the sin can be covered up by repentance and doing good deeds, yet when you conduct the sin intentionally, the sin cannot be covered up. If I tell you that the good deeds can cancel the sin, that is to say, I encourage you to break the precepts.

**Q.** If I break the precepts once intentionally and then keep them afterwards, by the will of Amitabha, can I go to the Pure Land of the West?

**A.** If you break the precepts and repent afterwards, you can go to the Pure Land by the will of Amitabha. But if you prepare to break the precepts, it will be difficult for you to go to the Pure Land. Since a true practitioner will not break the precepts and one who prepare to break the precepts will not practice eagerly. If you repeat the name of Amitabha without a true faith, how can you be reborn to the Pure Land?

**Q.** If I stop the electricity by reporting to the power company and the main connection is cut, afterwards when by emergency I connect the wire and use some electricity then cut off again. Is this thing against to the precept of stealing?

**A.** That is stealing. You never can do it.

**Q.** When salute the Buddha how shall I perform my thought?

**A.** During salutation you should think that you represent all the sentient beings saluting all the Buddhas, Dharmas and Sanghas.

**Q.** What is the maning of the wood fish and chime used during the chanting of Sutras?

**A.** These two kinds of musical instruments are used to drive away the sleepy

intention and also to beat the rhythm to get uniformity.

**Q.** The Pure Land Sect teaches one to perform the five precepts, ten good deeds, six Paramitas, four attitudes and repeat the name of Amitabha. Are these the steps of primary practicers and they are easier than those methods of other sects. Shall I get away with this easier sect and study those complicated and elaborate methods of other sects.

**A.** The five precepts, ten good deeds, six Paramitas and four attitudes are common to all sects. There are no easy sect and difficult one. Every sect has its own reference Sutra and its own method of practice. You can say that the Pure Land Sect is easy, because the ignorant old woman can do it. Or you may say that it is difficult, because the disciples and Bodhisattvas cannot tell its ultimateness. There is a proverb "Learn and you know you are deficient." You will know its difficulty when you become learned.

**Q.** After knowing the theory of impermanence one will be ordained to be a monk. Then one cannot perform the duties toward ones' country and home. Is one considered negative?

**A.** To be a monk is not negative. One will do the positive work of saving the sentient beings by propagating the Dharma to them.

**Q.** What are the five biggest sins?

**A.** They are slaying farther, slaying mother, slaying Arhan, hurting Buddha and destroying the Sangha.

## 佛教新聞

## Buddhist News in Free China

Translated by Mr. H. Y. Li

## Further News of the Chinese Buddhists in the Philippines

## President Chiang Summoned them to Court

Taipei—Presidnet Chiang Summoned the Chinese Buddhists in the Philippines to Court. Mr. H.T.Shih the party leader, led six members (part of them came back Philippines) to salute the President, who asked them the impressions on the visit of the mother country and hoped them to give the compliments to the overseas when they come back.

Then the President had a photo taken with them.

Taipei—They left for Manila and only Mr. M. S. Lin, the Principal of the Pusien School, left behind to wait to visit the schools after the summer vacation.

Taipei—They invited the Chinese Buddhists to dinner in the Shantao Temple of Taipei. The party leader Mr. Shih told that they would try to join up the Chinese Buddhists in the home and abroad and they also try to hold a worldwide conference of Buddhists in Taipei.

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#### Offerings of the Seventh Moon Warship Changed

Taichung—By the custom of Taiwan, people give offerings to worship the Gods in the middle of seventh moon of the old calendar. The offerings are all of animals' meat. Mr. T. S. Chou suggested to use vegetables instead of the meat for the offerings. He invited the Buddhists of the Lotus Club to explain the importance of using vegetables instead of meat to all the people.

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#### The Kaohsiung Youth Magazine out the Press

Kaohsiung—The Kaohsiung Youth magazine edited by the Young Men Dept. of the Buddhist Church was out the Press. It is a monthly magazine for the church members only.

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#### Chushan Lotus Club Established

Chushan—The Buddhist of Chushan established a Lotus Club. They invited Ven. Yungkuan and Mr. H.J.Li to preach every Sunday. They had also slides shown after the speech. Quite a lot People attended.

## 佛學論文

# TOPICS ON BUDDHISM

## POSITIVE LIVING

By Venerable Sumangalo

Many Buddhists fall into the error of thinking that a layman is expected only to observe the five precepts and that this constitutes the whole of Buddhist moral living. Actually this is only the first step and to

take the five precepts does not make one a Buddhist at all. ALL religions have these five precepts and also many people who have no religion at all are careful not to kill, to steal, to lie or stupefy themselves with alcohol or drugs or lead an indecent life.

In the Three Jewels there is hidden the real meaning of the POSITIVE side of Buddhism. Usually we take the Three Refuges and the Five Precepts at the same time. The Three Jewels are positive, but the Five Precepts are negative.

Negative and positive have a way of balancing each other. It is not by chance that we speak of a person who is insane in some degree as being of UNBALANCED mind. Lord Buddha taught us a Noble Middle Pathway between extremes. If we will give careful consideration to the little ceremony of the Three Refuges (or Three Jewels) we will see that it is a perfect balance of negative and positive. Let us consider these points.

When we take refuge in the Buddha we are making a positive or affirmative action that shows we feel confidence that Lord Buddha's way of life is the best way for us. Also this taking refuge in the Buddha is an act of reverence. Now reverence is positive. It is an activity of both mind and heart.

The second refuge is the most positive of all and also the hardest one to put into practice in one's life. To take refuge in the Dhamma is to take Lord Buddha's teachings as one guide for all of life. We can not do this unless we seek to study and understand the teachings and to do this requires effort. Therefore, when we take refuge in the Dhamma we are making a positive commitment.

The third refuge is one that is seldom correctly understood. Many people make the mistake of thinking that the Sangha mentioned in the refuges is only the monkhood. That is not strictly correct. When we take refuge in the Sangha we are accepting membership and fellowship with all those who have ever honestly and earnestly followed Lord Buddha's teachings. This includes the arahats, the high disciples, the humble but good disciples, the earnest laymen as well as the earnest monks. In other words, the Sangha is the Noble Fellowship of those who actually make serious effort to follow the Dhamma.