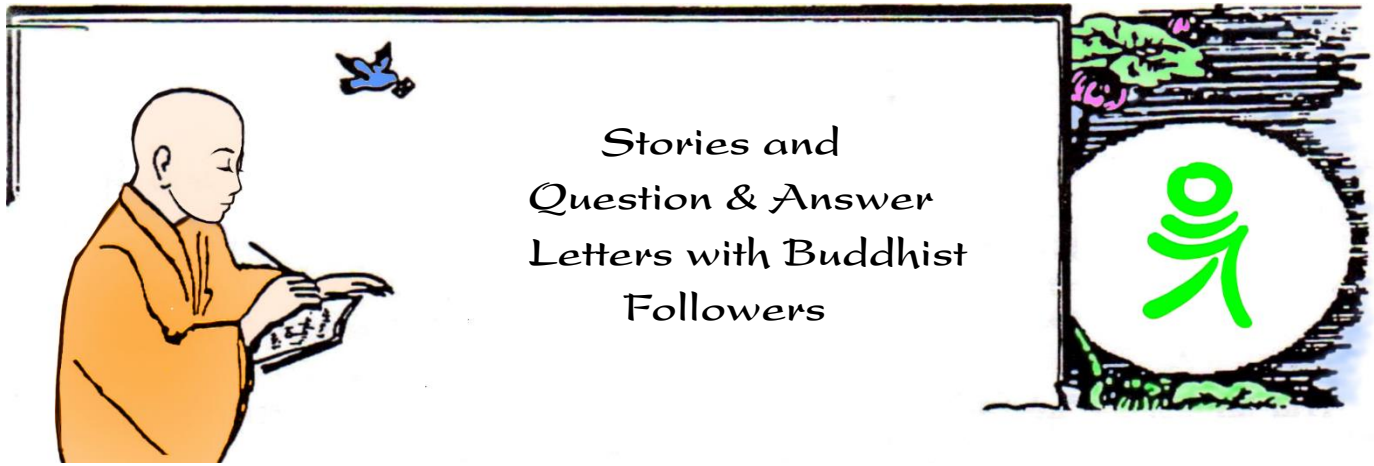




BODHISATTVA PRECEPT UPASIKA HUE-TINH

An Example of Gaining Rebirth

Upasika HUE-TINH, last name NGUYEN, first name THUY, born on the 14th of December, (*Chinese Calendar*) year of the Goat (1955)...

After the fall of South Vietnam in 1975, She and her family left Vietnam and relocated to the suburb of Oakville, Toronto, Canada...

As a female Buddhist, with a kind and peaceful disposition who had a firm faith in the Buddha-Dharma since childhood, she often prostrated and worshipped the Buddha, diligently practiced Buddha Recitation, vegetarianism, and throughout her entire life she maintained a pure Brahman conduct (*i.e., celibacy*). She did not contemplate starting a family of her own like her siblings and her friends and acquaintances...

When she turned 40, she had the opportunity to read the “**Ten Essentials of Pureland Buddhism**” written by the late Great Venerable Master Thich Thien Tam teaching the Dharma Door of cultivation that would enable practitioners to bring along their karmas to gain rebirth and forever escape the cycle of rebirths... She felt very fortunate and vowed to bring along her residual karmas to gain rebirth to the Ultimate Bliss World in this life and to attain the state of Non-Retrogression...

Several years later, she also had the opportunity to read the book “**Great Pureland Master Vo-Nhat Thich Thien-Tam: A Venerable Buddhist Master in Modern Times**” and developed even greater conviction and vowed toward her practice of Pureland Buddhism.

Subsequently she discovered the Venerable Master Thich Hai-Quang, headmaster of the Dharma Flower Temple: Pureland-Esoteric Congregation in Tucson, Arizona is the blood nephew as well as the successor to the Great Master’s dharma lineage who is currently practicing and propagating the Pureland Dharma Door (*through the books [she*

read subsequently] that he authored and wrote commentaries on, particularly those focusing on the Pureland Dharma Door, such as:

- The Daily Practices of Pure land Buddhism
(Combining the Pure land and Esoteric Tradition Commentary and Practice)
- The Thirteen Patriarchs of Pure land Buddhism. Etc.

Thus, eventually She found her way to the Dharma Flower Temple to pay homage, took refuge, and clearly revealed her sincere vow and determination to cultivate the Pureland path.

She was given the Dharma Name of Hue-Tinh and was selected by the Seminal Master and Bao-Dang (*head disciple, Mrs. Velvet Bias*) to enter the “Dharma Family” of the Pureland-Esoteric Lotus Flower Highest-Assembly Congregation of the Dharma Flower Temple.

She was inherently a thin and weak woman who was often subjected to chronic ailments and realized she would not live much longer; therefore, from that point forward, she became even more diligent in her Pureland-Esoteric practices (*through the guidance of our Venerable Master and myself*) and developed the great vow to gain rebirth to achieve the state of non-retrogression (*in the Ultimate Bliss World of the Amitabha Buddha*).

She also followed the example of her Great Dharma Sister Bao-Dang as well as other dharma brothers and sisters within the Dharma Family to prick blood from the tip of her ten fingers in order to:

- Copy the “**Buddha Speaks of Amitabha Sutra**” (*completed*).
- Copy the “**Envisioning Infinite Life Buddha Sutra**” (*half way completed when her ailment turned for the worse forcing her to stop*)
- Dedicate the virtuous merits of copying the Sutra to bring along her karmas to gain rebirth to the Western Ultimate Bliss World in this (*one*) life.

From Toronto, Canada to Tucson, Arizona, is a long distance covering over several thousand miles, yet on every major Buddhist service held annually (*in April, July, and October*) at the Dharma Flower Temple Congregation where the Venerable Master Thich Hai-Quang exited his retreat to return to Tucson to open the Eight-Precepts Cultivation period, she would put aside everything in her life to participate in these periods of learning and cultivating irrespective of her families interference and objections (*since they worried about the great distance, her being an ailing female, being a vegetarian, and arduous cultivation*)

On one occasion, she was involved in a traffic accident, her entire body ached, but she ground her teeth to bear the pain so her family wouldn’t know that she was hardly

able to move (*because she feared they would stop her from taking the trip*).

The next day she gathered all the strength she had to get on the airplane and then passed out (*from exhaustion*). At the Tucson airport, she required wheelchair assistance to get her off the plane. She was so fatigued she did not recognize the people picking her up. Upon arriving at the temple and hearing the voice of her Seminal Master, Myself, and her Dharma Siblings inquiring of her health, she was half crying, half laughing...as she said:

“I thought this time I wouldn’t make it here to participate in the Eight-Precept Cultivation with everyone in our Dharma Family, but here I am...”

When hearing this, the Master and everyone were touched with sadness as well as developing greater affection for her...

Hue-Tinh was a kind, gentle, and honest individual who was wise, intelligent, but the traits that set her apart were she always knew to uphold her duties and responsibilities and she cultivated diligently. Therefore, although she had not cultivated very long, her practice (*of the Pureland-Esoteric path*), understanding, and penetration of the Buddha-Dharma were superior to other dharma siblings who cultivated before her. Consequently, above from the Venerable Headmaster and below to her siblings in the Dharma Family, everyone adored and respected her.

This year of the Monkey (2004), her chronic illness (*cancer*) from long ago began to turn for the worse. Knowing for certain she would not live much longer, she asked to resign her job and returned to the Dharma Flower Temple to request that her head be shaved so she could be an ordained Buddhist. She respectfully asked the Venerable Master Thich Hai-Quang to bestow on her the ordained Bodhisattva Precepts and he honored her wishes. From that point forward, she developed the great vow of only Sitting (*not lying down*) to engage in Buddha Recitation until her final breath.

Because her parents were still living, in their old age and being chronically ill, they sincerely wished to be with their daughter in the last moments of her life. Following her filial pious ways and her love for her parents, after three weeks of intense Buddha Recitation practices for the final time at the congregation with her Seminal Master and dharma siblings, Hue-Tinh agreed to allow her sister-in-law to come and bring her back to Canada.

Before she left the temple to return home, the Venerable Master Thich Hai-Quang (*knowing beforehand she would not live much longer*) called her to give her this awakening teaching:

“Just as the Buddha and Patriarch taught:

This body is destructible, illusory, impermanent, and is the origin (*birthplace*) of all sufferings. This is something you are already aware; therefore, when you get home and

your illness turns for the worse, you must abandon all life destinies to concentrate on single-minded Buddha Recitation without interruption...

Supposing you die in that moment, then your spirit is absolutely certain to follow that line of Buddha Recitation to gain rebirth to the Ultimate Bliss World instantly.

This is considered:

- Life sending (*the body to this temporary Saha World*)
- Death returning (*gaining rebirth to the Ultimate Bliss World*).

This is similar to:

- Taking off a dirty and wretched shirt,

And:

- Putting on a precious and superior shirt."

She listened intently and then prostrated to her Seminal Master; her eyes filled with tears, she made the following unwavering declaration:

"Dear Master, I will follow your teaching by practicing from this moment forward; I promise not to change. I will not disappoint Master or Sister Bao-Dang for giving me love and all your heartfelt teachings so that I am where I am today...This gift I will never forget."

For the final three weeks of her life with her family, she knew the time of her going West was nearing; therefore, She practiced Buddha Recitation even more rigorously (*even though her body was failing her*), putting everything aside (*all life's matters*) to concentrate on directing her mind toward the Lotus World.

Several days before her death, as if knowing the time of gaining rebirth beforehand, she called a meeting with all her siblings, nieces, and nephews and in-turn gave away all of her worldly possessions, such as:

The Buddha statues, Sutras, Dharma Tapes, Prayer beads, Buddha altar, jewelry, money, home, etc.

The unique part of this is she knew exactly which possession each individual wanted from her (*as if reading their minds*) but they were too afraid to ask because she was dying. Consequently, everyone was extremely satisfied with his or her gifts...

Lastly, she expressed her final wishes such as her desire for cremation, what service she wanted, spreading of her ashes, giving and making offerings to the people and places that deserved her donations. She asked her family to telephone the Dharma Flower Temple to inform as well as invite her Elder Dharma Sister (*Bodhisattva Precept*) Bao-Dang (Velvet) to go to Canada to prepare for her supporting recitation and her funeral service (*since I had promised her previously*).

At noon on Thursday, March 4th, 2004, I was still able to communicate with her

through the telephone. I (*Velvet*) reminded and encouraged her to remember to let go of everything and to concentrate on Buddha Recitation. I also informed her what time my flight was due to arrive the next day and that two of her dharma siblings were coming with me to help with the supportive recitation. She was very happy and carefully advised her family to prepare food and shelter for me in a very thorough and thoughtful manner.

Thereafter, I also carefully taught her family members the proper dharma method of **“supportive recitation”** (*in case I did not get there in time!*).

(*Since Venerable Master **Thich Hai-Quang** has returned to his indefinite retreat in a distant remote location for the past thirteen years, he was not able to be with her in her final moments.*)

The night of March 4th, 2004 she was lying on her sick bed¹ with her eyes focusing on the statue of the Amitabha Buddha standing in the position of **“rescue and deliverance”** on her alter as she silently recited Buddha (*at this point, she no longer spoke*) in the midst of the sounds of supportive recitation from her family, relatives, siblings, nieces, and nephews (*as instructed by me on the telephone*) from nightfall to 3:05 AM on Friday March 5th, 2004 (*Chinese Calendar: February 15th, 2004 year of the Monkey*).

Suddenly her family saw a brightly shining light outside passing through the window similar to a laser beam (*at first everyone thought it was the headlight {high-beam} from a large vehicle, but that light was extremely bright and pure, not similar to that of a vehicle. It was a powerful green light, different from any other light they have ever seen before*).

Hue-Tinh gave rise to a smile, a single teardrop of joy lingered on her cheek and she peacefully passed away in the midst of the chanting supportive Buddha Recitation of her family. Both palms of her hand turned upward and spread out (*she had finally let go of everything, no longer having attachment to anything in this world*).

This period falls into the Tiger Hour (3:05 AM) of the early morning of a Friday (March 5th, 2004).

Outside, rain poured down as if cleansing the residual worldly conditions of a Buddha’s Child who had gained rebirth.

Her family continued to engage in supportive recitation for her just as I instructed earlier. Occasionally, they used their hands to feel for the warm spot² on her body and

¹ Although previously she had vowed never again to lie down by this time, this was no longer physically possible as she was dying. She was too weak to remain sitting.

² **Translator’s Note:** This practice is thought by the Buddha to be a way for loved ones to know where the spirit of the recently deceased is going after death. This concept is discussed in detail in Volume I of this series **“Philosophical Conversations with Buddhist Followers”**. Thus, I only briefly will mention that if the **“warm”** or **“hot”** spot lingers at the crown of the head, that individual has attained enlightenment or gained rebirth to the

found that her entire body was cold except for the crown of her head as the only spot remaining hot.

This supportive recitation continued until one in the afternoon of that day, yet that **“warm spot”** continued to linger. Her entire body was soft and clean similar to someone sleeping. She was more beautiful now than when she was alive.

Her entire family knew clearly:

She had gained rebirth to the Ultimate Bliss World. Therefore, everyone felt happy and honored as they rolled on the floor in celebration, talking and laughing spontaneously (*as opposed to weeping and being sad*).

At that time, her family followed the teaching of our Seminal Master (*who called from his retreat to give them guidance and encouragement*) to take her Bodhisattva robe to cover her body (*at this point, she had expired eight hours earlier*). In that moment, suddenly her face lit up and it appeared as if she smiled with approval.

At seven in the evening of that same day, I and her two dharma siblings, Upasika³ Vien-Chon and Upasaka⁴ Chon Hoa finally arrived (*our airplane was delayed four hours in Chicago due to bad weather*) to prepare to give her a proper funeral service for having gained rebirth.

Almost two days after she gained rebirth, her corpse (*from early Friday morning to Saturday's afternoon*) was left at home on her death bed (*Her home did not have air conditioning and although it was still winter time in Canada, the weather during those two days had become warm and pleasant*). Despite these conditions, her corpse remained soft, refreshed, and beautiful (*more than when she was alive*). There was no change in appearance and there was no odor. Her entire family including her father, siblings, nieces, and nephews surrounded her corpse and interacted among themselves happily without showing any sign of being afraid.

At this juncture, I feel it is important to include these **“additional details”**:

- After Hue-Tinh gained rebirth, rained poured down heavily throughout the early morning and did not cease until dawn. All the snow melted, the roads were cleansed, the weather became pleasant, and it wasn't snowing (*even though this was still Winter in Canada*).

- On Saturday morning (*March 6th, 2004*) her two dharma siblings and her entire family as well as I chanted another session of the Amitabha Sutra in order to pray for

Buddhaland (*feet=hell, knees=animal, stomach=hungry ghost; chest=human realm; forehead=heaven; crown=enlightenment*).

³ **Upasika**: female lay Buddhist.

⁴ **Upasaka**: male lay Buddhist.

her spiritual advancement (*certainty*).

- The weather remained clear and pleasant Saturday afternoon as we moved her corpse into the Funeral Home to prepare for the final service.

Even on Sunday, March 7th, 2004, her body remained soft and vibrant as if she were still living (*sleeping*). Her two dharma siblings, family, and I took charge of the final service and then made announcements to those relatives and friends viewing her for the last time.

On Monday, March 8th, 2004, I performed a service to relocate her corpse to the place where she was to be cremated. All of her colleagues were excused from work for a period of four hours by their supervisors in order to pay their final tributes to her.

(This is also another miraculous turn of events because most companies of a capitalist society value their work very much because time is money)

Another rather strange event is that when I arrived in Canada, I did not feel cold and did not see any snow on the ground! At noon on Sunday, I commented to Upasika Vien-Chon that we were visiting a snow country from the desert, yet how come there was no snow... then:

Approximately an hour later, the clear sky suddenly began snowing softly covering everything; it was extremely beautiful. Vien Chon, Chon Hoa, and I got out of the car in front of the funeral home to play in the snow and everyone followed our lead. A friend and an old co-worker of Buddhist Hue-Tinh said the following to me:

"It is snowing very little now, perhaps only enough for you to enjoy. Otherwise, ordinarily it snows much heavier, it is difficult to walk, most of us are afraid of it. I also have noticed you are a very blessed individual [perhaps as a gift from Hue-Tinh], the weather suddenly became very pleasant and you have many fruits to enjoy from our motherland [Vu-Sua, Mang-Cuc, Mang Cau, Sam-bu-che, etc) when ordinarily during this time of the year, these fruits are not this fresh, large, and sweet!]."

Tuesday morning, March 9th, 2004 is the day of spreading her ashes over a large local lake (*Lake Ontario*).

That day (*for the third time*), the weather suddenly became warm and pleasant, the sun was shining brightly as in Spring time. After we spread her ashes and returned home, the sky became dark and gloomy like ordinarily and soft snowflakes began to fall everywhere (*but not for very long*)!

Kim, an old friend of Hue-Tinh informed me later (*after I had returned to Arizona*) the weather had turned bitter cold, the snowfall was much heavier, and everyone laughing said:

"Bao-Dang brought the warm air from the desert only for several days, but that

warmth has now dissipated. The weather has now returned to the cold of Winter”.

These series of events are truly wholesome and unbelievably honorable that Heaven had reserved and bestowed upon a Buddha’s child who had just gained rebirth.

(A Discussion:

In the latter end of this Dharma Ending Age, of those cultivating other Dharma Doors seemingly none of them are able to attain enlightenment. Only by relying on the line of Buddha Recitation [i.e., concentrating on practicing Pureland Buddhism] can cultivators guarantee their liberation from the cycle of death, birth, and rebirth.

As Buddhists learning and cultivating the Buddha-Dharma, we must be conscientious of this cultivated dharma that accords with all cultivated levels of sentient beings and then develop the mind to follow the doctrinal door of Pureland Buddhism in order to Practice properly, genuinely, and faithfully. In doing so, cultivators will achieve “birth transcendence and death termination” in this present life.

Upasika Hue-Tinh here is truly an individual who was a:

“Good Person” who maintained the pious ways and avoided wicked conducts.

And:

Focused her mind to eliminate distraction.

In order to practice Buddha Recitation.

Ultimately she Gained Rebirth and liberation.

Truly magnificent for Upasika Hue-Tinh.

This is truly a shining example of Gaining Rebirth as well as being “evidence” and a “testimonial” for the Pureland Cultivators [specifically] and other dharma doors at the present time [in general] that is worthy of following and imitating...

Completed on March 11th 2004

Bodhisattva-Precept

Bao-Dang (Velvet)

