

IBC NEWSLETTER

Buddha's Light International Association of Melbourne

Melbourne – Fo Guang Shan
89 Somerville Road
YARRAVILLE VIC 3010
Website: www.ibcv.org.au
Email: ibcv@fgs.org.au
Ph: 9314 5147 Fax: 9314 2006

Ta Shih Chi Pusa

☒ Ta Shih Chi Pusa is one of the two main Bodhisattvas of Pure Land Buddhism. Her Sanskrit name is Mahasthamaprata Bodhisattva which means 'one who has attained great strength' and is therefore often called the Bodhisattva of Universal Strength. She is an attribute of Amitabha Buddha representing his Wisdom just as Kuan Shih Yin (Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva) is his compassionate aspect. She earned her rank of Bodhisattvahood in the distant past through the practice of reciting the name of the Buddha of that period of time. When Amitabha became a Buddha, she and Kuan Shih Yin became his disciples and thus were responsible in welcoming the faithful of the Buddha to his Pure Land at the time of their death.

The Shurangama Sutra states that in time to come "when Amitabha Buddha retires as the teaching host of the Pure Land, Kuan Shih Yin will take over the responsibility. When it is time for Kuan Shih Yin to retire as Lord of the Pure Land, Ta Shih Chi Pusa will be her successor..."

Ta Shih Chi Pusa is said to be so powerful that whenever she raises her hand or moves any part of her body, the earth will quake and tremble. Although she is a very popular Bodhisattva to the Chinese, she has not found as many devotees as Kuan Shih Yin and it is extremely difficult to find a temple dedicated solely in her honour. She is normally worshipped in the Triad with Amitabha Buddha and Kuan Shih Yin Bodhisattva and pictures of them together are commonly found in homes of the Pure Land Buddhists. Those who wish to form a karmic link with her should daily spend a few minutes contemplating on her and request for "wisdom and strength in cultivation" or mindfully holding her name through the recitation of "Namo Ta Shih Chi Pusa".

Recitation should be done with firm faith, devotion and single-mindedness so that all kinds of distracting thoughts are quelled. It is also very important that virtuous conduct be maintained so that one must not indulge in killing or harming others, stealing, living immorally, lying, speaking harshly, or taking intoxicants of any kind that delude the mind. To reach this great Bodhisattva one has to be pure both in mind and spirit. Practising mindfulness on Ta Shih Chi Pusa is the same as adoring Amitabha Buddha and qualifies one to take rebirth in the Pure Land after this earthly life.

The success in attaining Bodhisattvahood is dependent upon the fulfilment of the vast and noble vows set by the aspiring Bodhisattva. The Ten Great Vows of Ta Shih Chi Pusa, also known as the Universal Worthy Bodhisattva, which all Pure Land Buddhist should know are:

1. To worship and respect all Buddhas.
2. To praise the Thus-Come-One (The Buddha).
3. To cultivate the giving of offering.
4. To repent and reform all karmic faults.
5. To compliantly rejoice in merit and virtue.
6. To request the turning of the Dharma Wheel.
7. To request that the Buddhas dwell in the world.
8. To always follow the Buddhas in study.
9. To forever accord with living beings.
10. To universally transfer all merit and virtue.

Besides having fulfilled these great vows, Ta Shih Chi has also successfully practised the Four Great Vows of:

1. Saving the limitless living beings.
2. Cutting off all evil passions.
3. Studying the immeasurable Dharma Doors.
4. Realising the supreme Buddha Way.



☒ Mahasthamaprata Bodhisattva

Unlike Kuan Shih Yin Pusa whose role is to grant help and to succor being in misery, Ta Shih Chi Pusa render her help to a different category of people, those who are bent on putting to practise the Buddha's way of life and striving to attain perfection. Thus the number of beings who choose to become her devotees are few in number as cultivators of the path are scarce indeed. It is said that this great Bodhisattva has a Gold Pavilion or lotus platform which she will lend to those who hold her name so that they can ride upon it to the Pure Land. If you are one who is seriously striving for enlightenment, then you should not hesitate to recite the name of this great Bodhisattva constantly.

What is the Buddha path?

☒ The Buddha path is the concept of transcendence: do not differentiate between "you", "I", or others, and do not discriminate between life and death.

The Buddha path is the concept of mercy and compassion: treat all beings as relatives.

The Buddha path is the concept of dependent origination: the world and I are interconnected and interrelated.

The Buddha path is the concept of equality: act without selfishness, desires, or seeking.

☒ Venerable Master Hsing Yun



Upcoming Events

4 Oct ~ 9 Oct 2008

BLIA The 12th General Conference – FGS Taiwan

17 Oct 2008

Commemoration of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva's Renouncement Day

26 Oct 2008

Medicine Buddha's Dharma Function

16 Nov 2008

Eight Precepts Cultivation Retreat



The Picture of Pure Land



✠ The Pure Land (Sukhavati) or the Western Paradise of Amitabha Buddha gives one an impression of the grandeur of the paradise where one is able to enjoy the sights of Amitabha and his two principal assistants, Ta Shih Chi Pusa (Mahasthamaprata Bodhisattva) and Kuan Shih Yin Pusa (Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva), known to all as the "Three Sages" (San Sheng). Surrounding them are other heavenly beings each of whom stands upon a lotus flower. In front of Amitabha Buddha are seen numerous lotus flowers which are awaiting beings to be reborn from them as there is no womb born creatures in the Pure Land.

In Amitabha Sutra, Sakyamuni Buddha urged us compassionately at least three times to practice reciting Amitabha Buddha's name and vow to be reborn in the Western Pure Land. The full description on this paradise can be read from existing scripture such as the Amitabha Sutra which is easily available to those who sincerely seek for them.

Briefly it is a paradise in the West which is exquisitely adorned with gold and silver and all kinds of precious gems. There are indescribably beautiful lakes with golden sand that are surrounded by pleasant banks lined with jewelled trees and covered with heavenly lotus flowers which are grown in crystal pure water. It is filled with wondrous sounds and sights and fragrant flowers rain down three times a day. The flowing waters of the rivers hum the sounds of the holy dharma; even the melodies from the songs of plumed birds are filled with harmonious notes which induce those who hear them to remember the precious Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Here too the words of Amitabha Buddha teaching love, mercy, compassion, joy, sympathy, equanimity and so forth can be heard. Everything in this paradise is radiant, peaceful and beautiful. No defilement can be found as no evil birth is possible, and even the very name hell is unheard of. It is populated by Bodhisattvas, Deities and other heavenly beings and the pious ones who being reborn there, are destined to attain Nirvana.

In the Pure Land, Amitabha Buddha is assisted by two principal attendants Kuan Shih Yin Pusa and Ta Shih Chin Pusa, who will descend to earth to lead the faithful and devoted to the paradise at their hour of death. Buddhist temples dedicated to Amitabha Buddha always have the images of these Three Great Sages so that those who venerate Amitabha Buddha already honour Kuan Shih Yin Pusa and Ta Shih Chi Pusa. In the same way, Kuan Yin devotees are already the devotees of the Buddha and therefore qualify to take rebirth in the Pure Land.

After taking rebirth in this paradise one must not forget his other fellow beings who are still deeply submerged in the mire of painful existence. This thought will help to generate the desire to take rebirth again on this earth so as to deliver them from their great sufferings. This then, is the arising to the Bodhisattva nature which is born out of compassion and loving-kindness, and a new bodhisattva is born. Pure Land is therefore the land where beings can develop their bodhisattva spirit and have the opportunity to appear before the Buddha to declare their earnest wish to strive for Buddhahood so that they are able to save sentient beings. Here too the Bodhisattva Vows can be taken and Amitabha Buddha can then give his blessing and prophesies their future success in the career of a budding Bodhisattva.

The worship of Amitabha Buddha originated in India but took firm roots in China. Its teachings appealed especially to those who are not attracted by scriptural studies, ritualistic or meditative practices but possessing great faith, energy and devotion, prefer to rely on Amitabha Buddha to save them.

It must be stressed again that rebirth in the Pure Land does not constitute the attainment of Nirvana, as it is but one of the countless heavenly realms in the Buddhist Cosmology.

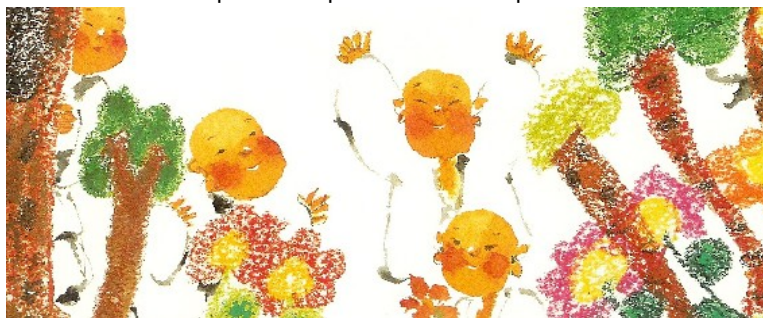
However there is a great difference between the Pure Land of Amitabha and the various heavenly states in that beings born there are free from the temptations of sensuous delights and that they will be blessed with the most excellent conditions to practise the Dharma, as have been described earlier, that will lead to Nirvana.

With the practice of meditation on the evil consequences of Samsara, one will put more effort in his practice of chanting of Buddha's name and appreciate the great opportunity of being a human being and having found the means of renouncing Samsara.

Pure Land Buddhism also has various meditation practices for those who are well on the path. Here are the five popular practices which anyone may practise to achieve rebirth into the Pure Land:

1. The meditation on Love which leads one to ponder and yearn for the weal and welfare of all beings, including the happiness and safety of one's own enemies.
2. The meditation on Pity which causes one to think of all the sufferings of sentient beings so as to arouse a deep compassion for them in one's own mind.
3. The meditation on Joy in which one dwells on the prosperity of others and rejoices in their happiness.
4. The meditation on Impurity in which one realises the evil consequences of defiled thoughts and the effects of unwholesome acts.
5. The meditation on Serenity which leads one to rise above the grips of the mental poisons of greed, anger and delusion, so that all unwholesome acts are discarded and one is able to subdue desires thereby attaining calmness and tranquillity of mind.

There are many other methods of meditating on Amitabha Buddha which are more profound but may not be suitable for beginners of the path. However, one should not be over anxious to practise them all or wish to determine which is the most effective practice. All are in fact suitable and beneficial as long as faith and devotion are present in the minds of the practitioners. For the present, it is best that recitation on Amitabha's name "**Namo O Mi To Fo**" be vigorously practised until the deep and inexpressible inner experience has been felt.



Passing Away of a Devotee Who practiced the Pure Land Dharma Way

✧ The following was related by Ms Chen of the temple about her mother-in-law who passed away recently and who was able to foresee her time of leaving the world by her cultivation of mindfulness of Amitabha Buddha's name.

Ms Wang, an old lady of aged 89, living in Shailer Park, passed away last month in Sunnybank Private Hospital. She was a devotee in the temple and mindful chanting of Amitabha Buddha's name had always been her daily cultivation. Ever since she knew that she was suffering from pancreas cancer, she whole-heartedly devoted her time in the mindfulness of the Buddha's name, letting go of all her earthly attachments. She said that she had put herself in the hands of Amitabha Buddha and was ready at any time to be received by the Buddha to the Western Pure Land. A week before her death, she told her family that she was going to leave the world on a day in the following week and that she was not afraid but rather delighted to go. Her family and some Dharma friends came to do supportive chanting for her as this was important to maintain her continuous right mindfulness of the Buddha's name. Though a few days before her death, she still suffered from vomiting of blood, she was in a completely sober state to recite the name of the Buddha until she passed way in peace at 6.48 a.m. on Thursday, 4th of September, 2008.

This should serve as a good example or evidence of those who succeeded in the practice of the Pure Land Dharma Way, a way to enable one to escape rebirth cycle in this life and be reborn to Amitabha Buddha's Western Pure Land. Pure Land Dharma Way is highly recommended to us by Sakyamuni Buddha in Sutras such as in Amitabha Sutra, he urged us repeatedly three times to vow to be reborn to the Western Pure Land by mindfulness of Amitabha Buddha's name. The Great Collection Sutra said that in this Dharma-ending Age, Pure Land Dharma Way is the only way that suits people of all 'roots' and helps them to escape the cycle of rebirths, gaining liberation and enlightenment within one life time. It is a feasible way as, apart from self effort, one can also have the supporting strength of Amitabha Buddha due to his 48 vows, hence referred to as the 'Dual Strength Dharma Way'.

✧ Elaine Pun

Do not say 'Goodbye' to Happiness!

✧ Happiness is purely a natural product arising from a gift of full support and recognition given to you by yourself. Without this recognition of self, happiness is an illusive phenomenon. Even if people criticize you, deny you or attack you, it does not mean that the self is denied. The only one who can deny you is yourself!

Thus, those who cannot bear other people's criticisms will feel upset for thirty days if people say one sentence, or bear grudges if people say two sentences. In fact, this only represents that you have absolutely no confidence in yourself.

Of course, people who are easily irritated by other's comments will definitely say 'Goodbye' to happiness.

We must know that wherever there are people, there are gossips and whoever has mouth, there are comments and criticisms. People who want to be happy should not be too minded about what others think.

Further, one who is too minded about people's comment will not only be unhappy, but also lose one's character and personality easily. It is difficult also for one to develop one's potential.

In short, mouths belong to others but life belongs to you. For those who are used to be tortured by other people's mouths, please use both their left and right brains to think, "Why should I be the slave of other people's words? Why should I be so minded about people's thoughts of me?" Only if you can see through the truth of this will happiness be controlled in your own hands!

Remarks:

In the Buddhist sense, we are never able to have a controllable 'true self' but is always misled by our deluded self that is easily affected by everything that happens in our surrounding (what people say, what people do and sorts of impermanent changes) leading to all kinds of afflictions arising from our heavy delusion of attachment and differentiation resulting in the three poisons of greed, anger and ignorance. Buddhism is to help us to realize this and to recover our true self or true nature.

✧ Elaine Pun

The highest kind of happiness

✧ The highest kind of happiness is Vipassana happiness, the happiness of insight, seeing how things are working. It is a very happy state when one begins to appreciate with a beginner's mind every moment as new, as fresh. So there is a great delight in existence which comes from a beginner's mind, from a reconditioned mind, a mind that is experiencing directly rather than thinking about everything.

The first days of a retreat may seem difficult because concentration is not well-developed. To climb a mountain, you need certain physical strength. If you are not yet strong, in the beginning you will feel tired and uncomfortable. But as the body gets stronger, climbing becomes easier.

It is the same in meditation. As concentration is developed, it becomes less difficult to stay in the moment.

Bare attention

✧ This is one quality of mind which is the basis and foundation of spiritual discovery. Bare attention means observing things as they are, without choosing, without comparing, without evaluating, without laying our projections and expectations on to what is happening:

Cultivating instead a choiceless and non-interfering awareness.

*An untrained mind is often reactive,
Clinging to what is pleasant,
Condemning what is unpleasant,
Grasping what is liked,
Pushing away what is disliked,
Reacting with greed and hatred.*

"A tiring unbalanced mind"



As bare attention is cultivated more and more we learn to experience our thoughts and feelings, situation and other people, without the tension of attachment or aversion.

We begin to have a full and total experiencing of what it is that's happening with a restful and balanced mind.

Ten qualities to have

Have a heart that is as broad as the universe.

Have kindness in delivering the multitude.

Have courage in propagating the Dharma.

Have perseverance in cultivating virtues.

Have wisdom in gaining right insight.

Have character to transcend the mundane world.

Have sincerity in protecting the Dharma.

Have capacity in tolerating others.

Have strength in forbearance and patience.

Have aspiration to strive for universal enlightenment.

✧ Venerable Master Hsing Yun



What kind of person should one be?

Like a mirror, we reflect upon ourselves.

Like a briefcase, we pick up and let go at ease.

Like a color pen, we beautify and improve life.

Like a notebook, we record our successes and failures.

Like a candle, we brighten up others.

Like a clock, we cherish our lives.

✧ Venerable Master Hsing Yun

The proper attitude for seeking the Dharma

Be honest with an open mind.

Be grateful and gracious.

Be humble in making inquiries.

Be open to self improvement.

Be able to change temperament.

Be diligent, frugal, and tolerant.

Be sincere and devoted in worshipping and reciting.

Be fearless regarding right views.

Be truthful and strive for facts.

Be determined to vow to be loving, kind and compassionate.

✧ Venerable Master Hsing Yun



Meditation, Buddhist & Tai Chi Classes held at Fo Guang Shan Temple

Basic Meditation, Buddhism & Tai Chi

Level: Level 1
Day: Saturday
Date: 25 Oct 08 to 15 Nov 08
Time: 1:30pm – 2:50pm
Cost: \$ 15 – 4 weeks (1st Class free)
 Booking is required

Meditation, Buddhism and Tai Chi

Practice Group: (Level 2)
Day: Saturday
Date: 25 Oct 08 to 15 Nov 08
Time: 3:00pm – 4:30am
Cost: Free Donation - Booking is required

中文禪修班

Day: Sunday
Date: 2 Nov 08 to 7 Dec 08
Time: 3:30pm – 5:00pm
Cost: \$33 – 6 Weeks - Booking is required

經典導讀班

Day: Saturday
Date: 1 Nov 08 to 6 Dec 08
Time: 3:30pm -5:00pm
Cost: Free donation - booking is required

電視佛學院

Day: Every Sunday
Date: From 19 Oct
Time: 2:00pm – 3:00pm
Cost: Free donation

Calligraphy 書法班

Day: Sunday
Date: 19 Oct 08 to 23 Nov 08
Time: 2:00pm – 3:30pm
Cost: \$55 – 6 Weeks

Chinese Painting 繪畫班

Day: Sunday
Date: 26 Oct 08 to 30 Nov 08
Time: 2:00pm – 3:30pm
Cost: \$65 – 6 Weeks

✂ For all enquiries regarding to the above & below mentioned classes please contact the Fo Guang Shan Temple on **9314 5147**
 Email: ibcv@fgs.org.au
 Website: www.ibcv.org.au

Growing Up Greener

✂ **KID POWER** How can parents help children grow up to respect the planet, rather than become carbon-heavy climate changers? Here are some ideas to help raise eco-kids. When it comes to the environment the two highest motivated groups in the community are parents and children. Children are learning about the environment at school, so why not give them the tools to make their own decisions about these things. Parents can help to empower their children by encouraging them to make changes themselves.

✂ **GETTING THERE** Fuel prices, carbon tax and congestion problems are likely to drive more people on to buses and trains, or looking for alternative modes of transport. But there are still a lot of kids who have never stepped on a bus or taken a ride on a train and see bikes for entertainment, rather than for getting places.

Picking a few easier journeys on public transport, or using the bike once in a while, will help them to be less reliant on the car and more open to different methods.

✂ **HOME GROW** Whether it's a couple of pots of herbs on the balcony or a fully fledged premaculture garden strew with no dig vegetable patches, home gardening can help children grow a greener heart.

All you need is a good quality potting mix and a bit of seaweed fertiliser. There's nothing worse than for kids to plant something that doesn't grow. It's important for them to have positive experiences early on. But as well, it's good for them to see that working with nature isn't always straight forward and there's an element of risk. If the parents can help the kids to get a sense of awe from nature, then they'll quickly pick up on that.

✂ **TURNING A LEAF** Story books are a great way to help children understand their role in the environment and help change the way young readers think and behave towards the environment.

✂ **WASTING** Try to make children aware of the waste. If they get a new toy, is there another toy or a function that we could get from the box and the plastic and the foam that it came in.

Month	Date	Day	Time	Program held at Fo Guang Shan Temple	
O C T O B E R	5	Sunday	10.00 am	The Great Compassion Dharma Function	
			11.30 am	BLIA Victoria Brach Monthly Meeting	
	4 – 9	Sat – Thu			BLIA The 12 th General Conference (FGS TAIWAN)
	11	Saturday			Fo Guang Chinese School, Commencement of Term 4
	12	Sunday		10.30 am	Dharma Service
	13	Monday		11.00 am	15 th day of the 9 th Lunar Month: Offering to the Buddha Dharma Service
	17	Friday		11.00 am	Kwan Yin Bidhisattva's Birthday. Offering to the Buddha Dharma Service
	19	Sunday		10.30 am	Dharma Service
N O V E M B E R	26	Sunday		10.00 am	Medicine Buddha's Dharma Function
	29	Monday		11.00 am	1 st day of the 10 th Lunar Month: Offering to the Buddha Sharma Service
	2	Sunday		10.30 am	Dharma Service
	9	Sunday		10.00 am	Eighty-Eight Buddha's Repentance Dharma Service
				11.30 am	BLIA Victoria Branch Monthly Meeting
	12	Wednesday		11.00 am	15 th day of the 19 th Lunar Month: Offering to the Buddha Service
	16	Sunday		7.30 am – 5.00 pm	Eight Precepts Cultivation Retreat
23	Sunday		10.30 am	Dharma Service	
28	Friday		11.00 am	1 st day of the 11 th Lunar Month: Offering to the Buddha Dharma Service	
29	Monday		10.30 am	Dharma Service	