

Bodhi Stand

UPASIKA KUO DI DICKERSON

compiled by Bhikshuni Heng Ch'ih

*KUAN SHIH YIN BODHISATTVA HAS ACCOMPLISHED
SUCH MERIT AND VIRTUE THAT HE CAN APPEAR
IN ALL MANNER OF FORMS, AND ROAM THROUGHOUT THE
LANDS,
SAVING AND LIBERATING LIVING BEINGS.
-DHARMA FLOWER SUTRA
Universal Door Chapter*

As a busy mother of four, Barbara Dickerson practices meditation, but cannot sit for long periods of time. She can, however, recite the name of Kuan Yin Bodhisattva as she goes about her daily duties. Having been introduced to the Dharma-door of reciting Kuan Yin Bodhisattva's name, she took it seriously and with sincere intent, began reciting in times of trouble to seek the Bodhisattva's compassion and in times of peace and happiness to repay the Bodhisattva's kindness.

Having lived at the City of 10,000 Buddhas for more than a year now, Barbara is gradually coming to realize the scope and depth of the Buddhadharmā. In her youth, "religion" was something people paid token homage to once a week or a few times a year, and always there was a price to pay. Seeking for the substance of various teachings to help mold her spiritual growth, she invariably found money the foremost concern of the religious institutions she visited. She was expected to tithe a percentage of her income in order to contribute to building funds for the construction of facilities which only got used at most once a week and more often only once every few months. Perceiving all too clearly the misplaced emphasis, she would not make further visits.

When her husband Willie discovered the City of 10,000 Buddhas, Barbara was supportive of his positive reaction, if a bit wary due to her previous experiences. When conditions seemed to stand in the way of their family moving to the City, Barbara encouraged the move despite the karmic bonds.

*WONDERFUL SOUNDS, OBSERVER OF THE WORLD'S SOUNDS,
PURE SOUND, SOUND OF THE SEA TIDE,
SOUND BEYOND ALL WORLDLY SOUNDS, IT IS,
AND SO WE SHOULD ALWAYS BEAR IT IN MIND.*

Having been deprived of direct spiritual guidance for so long, Barbara came to the City "feeling like a child who is just beginning to learn to walk and talk." But she has absorbed the pure sounds that teach people how to work for the benefit of others, the wonderful sounds that instruct children in the way of filial piety, and the sound beyond all worldly sounds which reveals to us our own inherent enlightened nature, and applied them in a practical way to her role as mother and wife.

"We as a family are concerned with straightening up our messes. We understand now that a good way to begin to get at the 'mess' in our minds, is to start with cleaning up the 'mess' around us. And yet it simultaneously works the other way, too, because the more we get our external 'mess' cleaned up, the more our minds are quieted."



BARBARA DICKERSON

*COMPASSIONATE SUBSTANCE, THE THUNDER OF PRECEPTS
ROARS.
KIND INTENT, THE WONDROUS GREAT CLOUD BILLOWS,
SHOWERING DOWN SWEET DEW AND DHARMA RAIN
THAT DISPEL THE FLAMES OF AFFLICTION.*

"We are determined to deal with the problem of anger in our daily life. We devise expedients which all six members of the family participate in so as to curtail temper tantrums in the young ones and anger and frustration in the adults." Having already cooperated in adopting a pure vegetarian diet for the entire family for many years now, the Dickersons also enjoy coming as an entire family to participate in the daily ceremonies at the City of 10,000 Buddhas and regularly attend the lectures to hear the Dharma. Using wholesome expedients to help the children develop good habits and the adults get rid of bad habits provides an atmosphere in their home in which the understanding is, "We all make mistakes. We are all changing and learning."

*LIVING BEINGS ARE BESET BY HARDSHIPS
AND OPPRESSED BY LIMITLESS SUFFERINGS.
THE POWER OF KUAN YIN'S WONDERFUL WISDOM
CAN RESCUE THE WORLD FROM SUFFERING.*

Last winter when Barbara's husband was seriously ill, her youngest son (born on Shakyamuni Buddha's Birthday, 1981) also became quite ill and Barbara was deeply concerned.

One night after all the family had retired, she lay listening to her young sons' crying. She had been reciting Kuan Yin Bodhisattva's name repeatedly throughout the day and picked up the chant in her mind again, attempting to change her worry into a positive healing force. Suddenly above her head, all about her in the room, she saw white clouds. Rubbing her eyes in amazement, she looked again, but the clouds were still there. Then from within the clouds, purple and golden lights began to glow and shine. As she watched the beautiful colors she felt a sense of peace and tranquility envelop her. Just looking at the clouds and colors made her happy. After a while they disappeared and she and her young son both fell into a natural sleep. The next morning her child was on the way to recovery. The danger had passed.

*THOUGHT AFTER THOUGHT, HAVE NO DOUBTS.
KUAN SHIH YIN, PURE AND SAGELY,
IN TIMES OF SUFFERING, OF AGONY, DANGER, AND DEATH,
CAN BE OUR REFUGE AND PROTECTOR.*

*-DHARMA FLOWER SUTRA
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