

BUDDHISM AND VEGETARIANISM

The great compassionate mind is the Buddha's Mind. The spirit of Buddhism is compassion and equality (impartiality). If we wish to attain a mind of compassion and equality, first, we must not kill; second, we must save lives; third, we must practice vegetarianism. If we can accomplish all three, our compassionate mind will manifest.

Practicing Buddhism is to learn from the Buddha, learn from the Buddha's purity of body, speech, and mind. "Learning from the Buddha's body" is to emulate the Buddha's actions. All the actions in our daily lives should be proper and meet the highest standards. "Learning from the Buddha's speech" is to always be proper in our speech—no bad-mouthing, backbiting, lying, or frivolous speech. "Learning from the Buddha's mind" is to constantly examine and reflect upon the arising and movement of all our thoughts so that they are of the highest standard of perfection, truth, virtue, and beauty. Thus, we will attain the Buddha's compassion, wisdom, samadhi, and even his miraculous powers and marvelous functions.

Misconceptions about Vegetarianism

There are many expedient means to help us attain the pure state of body, speech, and mind. Expedient means are a bridge, a pathway. If we cultivate the Way or work without using expedient means, it will not be easy to succeed. Therefore, in our cultivation we must first practice vegetarianism—this is an expedient means. The spirit of Buddhism is compassion and equality, if we wish to attain a mind of compassion and equality, first, we must not kill; second we must save and protect lives; third, we must practice vegetarianism. If we can accomplish all these, our compassionate mind will manifest. A compassionate mind is the Buddha's mind. Therefore, even though being a vegetarian seems very ordinary, its meaning is very profound and far reaching.

However, today, many people feel that they need not be vegetarians to practice Buddhism. Some scholars have even proposed mistaken views that have influenced

many vegetarians to start eating meat. For example, they say that the Buddha did not teach vegetarianism, that it is not related to one's cultivation; they even think that being a vegetarian cannot help eradicate karma or help one attain the Way or liberation. They also give many examples that misguide people, saying that animals such as cows, horses, and elephants eat grass but still are butchered and suffer in the three evil realms; therefore, being a vegetarian does not help our cultivation. When these mistaken views are presented, they influence many people who were originally vegetarians to start eating meat.

In practicing Buddhism, if our viewpoint is wrong, the direction of our cultivation will be diametrically opposed to the teaching; and even though we spend a lot of time on it, we will not obtain good results. This is due to mistaken views. Cultivation is in this very mind; the slightest error leads to endless mistakes. Acting against the Way, we stray further and further from the Way. If we encounter steep cliffs and precipices, we will fall into the precipice, creating problems for ourselves.

Being in Accord with the Compassionate Mind

If we carefully investigate the view that being a vegetarian cannot lead to liberation and that we can still become animals, we will realize that cows, sheep, and horses eat grass not because of their own resolve. Rather, it is a form of retribution; they have to eat grass, or they will die; it is a form of suffering. But in practicing Buddhism we must examine our resolve; we must understand the true aim of vegetarianism. Only when our viewpoint is correct can we benefit from our practice. Cows and sheep are vegetarians but they do not resolve to do so. We are vegetarians because we have resolved to give rise to a mind of compassion and equality.

Furthermore, even though many people who have no religious beliefs are also vegetarians; this is due to their fear that animal flesh contains too many antibiotics, hormones, and poisons; they worry that eating meat will cause hardening of the arteries or cancer. Many scholars advocate vegetarianism for their health; they not only advocate

vegetarianism, but even advocate eating raw vegetables. But these views are completely based on the wish to maintain health; the capacity of their mind is narrow and they are not in accord with the mind of practicing Buddhism, hence their blessings are much less or there are no merits.

“Being in accord with” is to be in accord with the mind of compassion and equality. The mind of equality and compassion is the Buddha and bodhisattva. Therefore, the *Lotus Sutra* says, “When all sentient beings are happy, all Buddhas are happy.” The bodhisattvas have a mind of compassion as the foundation; because of their compassionate mind, they give rise to the bodhi mind; because of their bodhi mind they will attain enlightenment. What is a compassionate mind? It is what Mencius says, “Seeing its life, we cannot bear to see its death; hearing its voice, we cannot bear to eat its flesh.” When we hear the loud and pitiful cries of animals before they are slaughtered, we feel that it is very sad and cruel; therefore, due to a mind of compassion, we do not eat the flesh of sentient beings. The Buddhist sutra says that savage animals also have Buddha nature. Both humans and animals desire to live and fear death; that is their awareness. Therefore the first reason for being a vegetarian is totally based on the mind of compassion and the truth that all sentient beings possess Buddha nature.

Second, everyone is the subject to the causality of the three periods of time—past, present, and future. If we now eat the flesh of animals, in the future they can also kill us and eat our flesh. Most people also know that if we eat eight ounces we have to return half a pound. The principle of causality never changes. Therefore we should not eat meat.

Third, all sentient beings are our relatives. The meat we eat today may be that of our previous relatives or good friends. Eating meat is like eating our own relatives. Some people believe in this principle but others may not.

Therefore, in order to be grateful and repay kindnesses, we must have a mind of compassion. When we gather together with our parents, teachers, superiors, brothers, and fellow cultivators of this life, it is due to previous affinities; but there are good and bad

affinities. If we have formed good affinities with others in the past, we will get along with them in this life and help each other. If we stole from or cheated people, or did not get along with them, then when we meet them in this life, they will be our enemies. This is due to the causality of the three periods of time. If we observe carefully, we will realize that causality is in every aspect of our daily lives.

The Suffering of Transmigrating in the Six Realms

Once there were two great scholars, Han Shan and Shi De, who were the incarnation bodies of Bodhisattvas Majushri and Samantabhadra. One day, when Han Shan traversed the world to save sentient beings, he saw a wedding feast in a village, with over a hundred banquet tables, accompanied by drums and cymbals. Everyone was very happy. But Han Shan began to sob. When relatives and friends of the wedding party saw this they scolded him, “You are crazy; this is a joyous occasion, why are you weeping?” And they wanted to chase him away. Han Shan answered them, “I am not crazy. You are the crazy ones!” They said, “You are acting like a fool; how can you say that we are crazy?” Han Shan then sighed and recited the following poem: “Transmigrating in the six realms is to suffer. Grandchildren marry their grandmothers. Cows and sheep sit in the honored seats. The six relations are being cooked in the pot.”

Most people do not have the wisdom eye, the Dharma eye, or the heavenly (deva) eye; therefore, they cannot see the transmigrations in the six realms. They do not know that the bride and groom were actually related as grandchild and grandparent in the past. That is why Han Shan said, “Transmigrating in the six realms is great suffering; grandchildren marry their grandmothers,” exclaiming that everyone lives in delusion and confusion. “Cows and sheep sit in the honored seats; the six relations are cooked in the pot,” means that the wedding guests are cows and sheep that were killed in a previous life, and were born into this life as humans, sitting in the honored seats. The chickens, ducks, fish, and meat that are being cooked are the six relations from a previous life. The Buddha and bodhisattvas have clairvoyance and can see things clearly, that is why they tell us not to

eat the flesh of sentient beings. This is totally based on the mind of compassion and equality.

Transmigrating in the six realms is great suffering. If, from life to life, we do not know to practice the Way diligently, we will transmigrate unceasingly. Of the six realms, the first is the heavenly realm. If we practice the ten virtuous acts, the four dhyanas, and the eight concentrations, we can ascend into the heavenly realm. The second is the realm of the asuras. Asuras have the blessings of heaven but not the heavenly virtues; they have ugly features. Third is the realm of human beings. We are now in this realm, yet each of our blessings and retributions is different. Fourth is the realm of animals. Next is the realm of hungry ghosts. Sixth is hell, the realm of greatest suffering; it is filled with great sinners. If we do not practice diligently, we will transmigrate in the six realms and endure the endless suffering of birth, old age, illness, and death. After we have used up all the blessings of heaven, we will descend into the human realm, and because of our evil karma, we will again descend into the evil realms and become animals. So, like a carriage wheel, we are constantly transmigrating without end in the realms of heaven, humans, hell, hungry ghosts, and animals. Therefore human life is a sea of sorrow and endless suffering.

Both Mahayana and Theravada Promote Vegetarianism

Did the Buddha talk about vegetarianism? The Mahayana Bodhisattva precepts clearly state that we must not eat the flesh of sentient beings, and must also observe the six fasting days. In the Theravada scriptures, the Buddha also speaks of eating the “three pure meats,” and “five pure meats,” so we can see that the Mahayana and Theravada sutras both advocate compassion and the protection of life. If we have to eat the “three pure meats,” it is also an expedient means; that is because new cultivators and students of Buddhism still harbor the craving for food. Even though eating meat creates karma, people cannot break old habits right away; they feel that food has no flavor without meat; therefore, the Buddha established the expedient means of the “three pure meats.”

“Three pure meats” must have three requirements so that the meat eaten will be pure and not create sin. First, not seeing it being killed. Second, not hearing it being killed. Third, not suspecting it being killed, meaning that it was not specifically killed for us.

First, “not seeing it being killed.” To see it being killed means that when many people go to the market, they see chickens being killed, feel that the meat is therefore very fresh, so they not only do not save the chicken from death, but intentionally buy it. They do not have a compassionate mind; therefore, eating this meat creates sin.

Second, “not hearing it being killed.” Hearing it being killed means that a reliable person tells us that this chicken was specifically killed for us. If we hear people say this and still want to eat this chicken, it is sinful. Or, if we ourselves hear the agonizing cries of a chicken or duck when it is being killed, we should not eat its meat.

Third, “not suspecting it being killed” means that in the butcher shop or market place, the chicken was bought by the store owner and was not specifically killed for us. This is “not suspecting it being killed.” If we go to a friend’s or relative’s house at New Year’s, everyone feels that it is a rare occasion to get together, so they enthusiastically have a chicken specifically killed for us. If we eat of this meat, this creates evil karma. If we do not eat meat, this chicken would not have died because of us. Based on compassion, not only we ourselves do not kill, but we do not ask others to kill for us. Some people are afraid to kill life themselves, therefore they ask others to help them kill a chicken or duck or fish and then enjoy eating it, causing others to create bad karma. This is the same as asking them to kill; even though this is being an accomplice in crime, but because the mind is evil and poisonous, it is likewise sinful

If we wish to protect our life and have good health, yet cannot become totally vegetarian, we should at least eat the “three pure meats.” After we are used to eating the “three pure meats” we will gradually realize our virtuous roots and cultivate a compassionate mind. We then can go a step further and eat the “five pure meats.” In order not to create sin, there are five rules we should follow in eating the “five pure meats.” Besides the three

previous rules, we add two more. One is “died naturally.” If the animal died naturally from illness, old age, or an accident, we can eat it. But people now feel that the meat of an animal that died from illness or old age is unsanitary; therefore there is not much chance of eating this type of meat. Another rule is “remnants from birds;” this is to eat the remains of animals from the mountains that have been eaten by birds. Again, this is also rarely done. So we might as well give up eating meat completely. This is to be truly pure.

Observing the Six Fasting Days

Another expedient means of practicing vegetarianism is to observe the “six fasting days.” Many people, from a compassionate mind, abstain from meat or only eat an early meal on the first day of the month. That is good. But it is not recorded in the Buddhist scripture. It is only an expedient means for people in the mundane world. According to regulations, to truly attain benefits, we must observe the “six fasting days.” Those are the 8th, 14th, 15th in the first half of the month, the 23rd, and the last two days of the month, a total of six days. In those six days we must not only completely abstain from the meat of sentient beings, but must maintain purity of body, speech, and mind. The eyes only see what is proper; the ears only hear what is proper; the mouth does not speak of the right and wrong of others; the mind does not have delusive thoughts; the body only performs good deeds—that is truly observing the six fasting days. Some people also take the eight prohibitory and fasting precepts during these six days or at another time. These can all increase blessings and eradicate karmic obstacles.

Why should we observe the six fasting days? It is because there is a cause and effect for everything in this world. On the 8th day of each month, the retinues of the four Heavenly Kings come down to earth to inspect the good and evil in men. If we do good deeds on that day, the retinues of the Heavenly King will immediately record them and report them to the Kings; then one’s blessings and lifespan will increase in this life. If we do bad deeds on that day, our sins are very serious, the Heavenly Kings may not send us good retributions in the next life, but will immediately send us great disasters in this life. On

the 14th day of the month, the sons of the four Heavenly Kings will inspect the human realm. On the 15th day of the month, the four Kings will come down in person. The same thing happens in the second half of the month. Therefore, during these six days, we should “do no evil; do all good.” Whether we are in the mundane or the supra mundane world, we should diligently and unceasingly do good deeds and avoid doing bad deeds. Then our blessings and lifespan will truly increase.

Some people feel that these sayings seem to mean that we only do good deeds when the Four Heavenly Kings come to inspect us. Actually, these six fasting days are just expedient means. When our good habits have fully developed, every day will naturally be a “six-day fast.” Good habits are difficult to cultivate but bad habits are quickly learned. Yet the bad habits that we acquire in this life and become addicted to are very difficult to break. For example, smoking is an easily acquired habit, but to quit smoking is very difficult. Addiction to alcohol is also a difficult habit to break, so are night-life and other such habits. Therefore, Buddhism tells us that we should first gradually get rid of our bad habits. After we develop the thought of acquiring good habits, our mind will be filled with brightness.

A Right Causal Mind is the Foundation

Vegetarianism has many benefits. But to truly achieve the aim and benefits of vegetarianism, we must generate a compassionate mind and a mind of equality. No matter what we do, our resolve should be ‘right.’ If our resolve is right, whether we recite the Buddha’s name, recite the sutras, or are vegetarians, they will all create infinite merits and blessings. However, in similar situations, if our resolve is not “right” there may not be blessings or merits. If we do not give rise to a compassionate mind and a mind of equality, and only practice vegetarianism for the sake of our body, even though we may obtain good health, that is “ego-attachment (attachment to the false ego);” the mind’s ignorance and foolishness will increase, and there will be no merits. Even animals that eat grass are like this. They do not do it from any resolve to generate a compassionate mind or mind of equality; it is just the result of their past karma. Most people say that cows

and sheep are vegetarians and still cannot attain liberation. That is because they only see the surface of things and neglect the true reason for not attaining liberation. Therefore this is a completely mistaken view.

In our cultivation, whether we are lay people or monastics, we must have right understanding and right view, and should study Buddhism from truly enlightened, good and knowledgeable teachers. Making a resolve to be a vegetarian is very important to the cultivator, but there is now an unhealthy trend in Buddhism: many people, who are originally vegetarians, have taken the five precepts, and cultivate very diligently, later hear that the esoteric sect allows people to eat meat and drink wine, so they start to follow those ways, feeling that the esoteric sect is very good since they can enjoy the five worldly desires and still attain liberation and buddhahood. This is an erroneous viewpoint! They don't realize that the reason the esoteric sect do not practice vegetarianism is because they once led the life of animal herders in Tibet and there were no vegetables there; therefore, they had to eat meat. Now that they are in Taiwan, because the environment is different, many of them have become vegetarians. Therefore we should know that in practicing Buddhism, we should be vegetarians based on a mind of compassion and equality. But there are those who want to cut corners, use the esoteric sect as a foolish excuse to give themselves an expedient means, give rein to the five desires, and take the wrong road. This will create sins.

The Mind Gives Rise to Discriminations and Attachments

Many people feel that vegetarian food is lacking in nutrients, or that vegetables are tasteless. Actually, this is a problem of the mind, not a question of whether vegetarian food is nutritious. Whether food tastes good or bad is not absolute; it is the result of the mind that discriminates.

For example, some people like to eat lightly seasoned foods. Cantonese people like foods that are sweet, sour, and salty. People from Hunan, Sichuan, and Hubei, like foods that are spicy and salty. Zhejiang people like foods with strong odors, the stronger the tastier,

just as some people who like to eat fermented tofu, yet its smell gives others a headache. People from southern China like to eat rice; northerners like to eat pasta and like to place a garlic clove and spicy sauce in the wheat pastries, feeling that it is very delicious and better tasting than dishes served at a New Year's banquet. Once, a gentleman liked bitter melons so much that if someone invited him to dinner and didn't serve them, he would immediately leave. Brazilian people like to eat sour foods; if their meal doesn't include some sour dishes, they will not enjoy eating it. Therefore, sour, sweet, bitter, and spicy— which food tastes best? When we understand this preference for different foods among different people, we will realize that taste is illusive and unreal; it is all due to our own discriminations and attachments.

Buddhism teaches that “all dharmas arise from conditions; all conditional arisings are empty in nature” All phenomena arise from the coming together of causes and conditions; they are all illusory and empty in nature. Taste for food is the same. In one aspect, it is due to past habits, in another aspect, it is due to the discrimination and attachment of each person, feeling that this food tastes good and agrees with one's taste.

Both lay people and monastics may have had these experiences. Before they were vegetarians, they had the habit and attachment of eating a lot of fish and meat; they were not accustomed to crude and simple foods. But after becoming a monastic or vegetarian for a long time, for 10, 20, 30, or even 40 years, they feel that vegetables are delicious, that they now are sweet and fragrant. Meat and fish now smell strong and make them nauseous. This is also due to the mind's discriminations.

Many people often rush to the bank before closing time to cash a check and are very distressed if they don't get there on time. If their friend tells them, “I can't help you but can invite you to dinner”—even though the food is plentiful and delicious, because of their financial problem, they cannot enjoy it. Because their mind is filled with vexations, food is tasteless. In our society today, there are many laborers who eat very plain and simple food, yet they are very healthy. On the other hand, the rich eat luxurious meals each day, and even take supplements, yet their health many not be good. That is because their minds are filled with vexations; they are not able to digest or absorb their food,

which is soon excreted. This proves that whether one is a vegetarian or eats meat, whether the food tastes good or bad is entirely due to the mind.

Vegetables Have the Most Natural Nutrients

Most people say that vegetables are low in nutrients. This does not make sense. Many people in today's society who have no religious beliefs are vegetarians only for health reasons. For decades, we have been vegetarians and have never eaten meat, yet we are very healthy. This proves that vegetables are very nutritious. In medicine today, vitamins and proteins are mostly extracted from plants and seldom extracted from animals. So how can people say that vegetables have no nutrients? Furthermore, don't strong animals such as elephants, cows, and horses eat grass? This proves that plants are very nutritious. Therefore, whether vegetables are nutritious is not the problem; it is our very mind.

The lifespan of a human being is now very short. Based upon historical records, people of the past lived very long lives of a hundred, a thousand, or even ten thousand years. Think carefully, now with the advances in medicine and science, we should be much healthier, but why is our lifespan shorter than that of people in the past? The reasons are clear and easily seen. First, in the past, people ate natural foods, vegetables, and fruits, used leaves for their clothing, not like people now who eat and dress luxuriously, yet their food contains many artificial ingredients or chemicals. Second, in the past, wood was used to build houses. For example, Sui Ren Shi (legendary discover of fire) rubbed pieces of wood together to make fire; Yiu Cao Shi (legendary Chinese ruler who taught people to build tree houses) built tree houses out of wood. That is why, for their health, people now like to eat natural, organic foods and live in houses built from wood. This is reverting to ancient practices. This proves that if we are now vegetarians, it must surely be very healthy and nutritious.

If the Causal Ground is Not True, the Fruit Will Be Defective

Buddhism says that the reason for being a vegetarian is not so that people can live for hundreds of years, but because of their compassionate mind, their mind of equality. First, sentient beings are future Buddhas and bodhisattvas, therefore they should not eat the flesh of sentient beings. Second, everyone has Buddha nature. Besides protecting our own life, we also must respect the lives of all sentient beings. Third, it is based on the principle of causality of the three periods of time. Therefore we clearly understand the cause for vegetarianism; it is the bodhisattva cause, the right cause. Doing our work on the basis of these principles, our good retribution will be limitless. If we do not have a correct causal mind in practicing vegetarianism, even though good actions lead to good retributions, the latter will be greatly reduced.

This mind is very subtle. If our causal mind (intention) is right, all our actions will have infinite merits—they will be bright and virtuous dharmas. If our intentions are not right, no matter how hard we work, we will not necessarily have blessings and good retributions, and may even create evil karma. Both Buddha Dharma and conventional dharma are like this. Therefore, in society, whatever career we pursue, we must constantly examine this causal mind and ask ourselves why we wish to become a physician, an architect, a politician, a businessman, or even pursue knowledge. For example, with what mind do politicians, campaign for office? If it is with a mind of compassion for the country and society so that all people will have peace, their jobs and families will be protected, and all their actions are based on the love and care for people and things—in these politicians, the higher their positions the better; they are already bodhisattvas! Because of their high positions in society, they can serve more people and do more important work. Is that not the bodhisattva way? However, if they only inflate themselves, are tempted by name, profit, or wealth in campaigning for office, it will be disastrous; they will not only suffer defeat and infamy, but will also descend into the lower realms in the future.

Supra mundane dharma is also like this. The concept of reciting the sutras and meditation must be clear. For example, there are now so called “chanting groups” who are invited to go and recite the sutras for the dying. After the chanting, they ask for money, as if it were

a business of buying and selling the Buddhist sutras. In Buddhism this is “to sell the Tathagata.” This not only has no merits but creates sin. Reciting the sutras is a good thing, it is a Buddhist practice; how could it become sinful? This is due to an erroneous mind. Also, when we are learning to meditate, it can fundamentally help us to enlighten the mind and see the true nature, to cultivate samadhi and wisdom, but some people in our society do not have this concept; they wish to achieve psychic powers through meditation, hoping that the bodhisattvas will tell them the fate of certain people... Meditating with the aim of getting something is not only devoid of merits, but will easily lead to vexations and even cause mental problems. Furthermore, monastics should also harbor a proper view in cultivation, constantly reflect that their reason for embracing the monastic life is because they wish to renounce the world, renounce the home of the three realms, the home of ignorance, to benefit oneself and others. If our viewpoint is wrong, even if we embrace the monastic life, there will be no merits. Why? If we do so because of certain stresses in life, or to escape from debtors: “the cause is not true, hence the fruit is distorted,” when our viewpoint is not correct, we will not obtain the great benefits of embracing the monastic life.

Therefore, the differences in this mind are very subtle. Missing it by the tiniest bit, we are off a thousand miles. Buddhism says, “the three realms are only this mind; the ten thousand dharmas are only our mind consciousness.” There is no other aspect in cultivation; it is only how we regulate our mind, how we use this mind; we must achieve a concentrated mind, a pure mind, and a clear mind, be able to discriminate what is brightness and what is darkness, what should be done and what should not be done. The mind must be perfectly clear.

Buddhism teaches us these right and correct truths. If this mind is like a mirror, without the least bit of defilement, without giving rise to a single delusive thought, is like a pool of still water, constantly abiding in samadhi and wisdom, that is the Buddha Dharma. When we truly attain this level, the mind will penetrate all the dharma realms and will naturally generate response and reach what most people aspire to—“All our wishes will be granted,” and “When the mind is transcendental, blessings arrive.” Then both our

studies and careers will surely be successful. If the mind is always scattered, drowsy, and confused, we will even have bad dreams at night, be lethargic in the daytime, unable to make clear decisions in anything; then how can we generate any response?

Nurturing Blessings and Wisdom

Vegetarianism is not only intimately related to Buddhism, but it is also closely related to our merits, virtues, wisdom, and samadhi. Both the Mahayana and Theravada sutras extol the principle of vegetarianism. Many people are ignorant of the Buddha Dharma, so to enhance their name and reputation, they disseminate wrong views, saying that in practicing Buddhism they do not have to be vegetarians, thus harming many of those who truly wish to cultivate and leading them on the wrong path. Therefore, we sincerely hope that every practitioner of Buddhism will take the right road. In cultivation, we must first cultivate blessings and merits. To generate blessings and merits we must uphold the precepts and have a compassionate mind. Yet, to develop a compassionate mind, first, we must not kill; second, we must save and protect lives; third, we must be vegetarians. If we can incorporate these principles into our daily lives, discipline and train ourselves, we will finally achieve true compassion and impartiality; the mind will be pure and we will attain liberation. Buddhism is the truest of truths. If we put in one measure we will obtain one measure; if we put in ten measures, we will obtain ten measures.

Vegetarianism is also good for our health. From a medical viewpoint, vegetables can lower blood pressure, decrease the causes of cancer and many other diseases. But in Buddhism, the promotion of vegetarianism is totally based on a compassionate mind. Therefore, whether people hope for good health, to improve themselves, or increase wisdom, blessings, merits, or compassion, they all should practice Buddhism and vegetarianism. The first step is to gradually get used to eating the “three pure meats;” after that, eat the “five pure meats.” From never killing life, saving lives, and protecting lives, we advance to practicing vegetarianism.

The foundation in practicing Buddhism is to establish right understanding and right view, hope that everyone will have this realization and knowledge, believe that the wise will surely know how to take care of themselves, work diligently from the cause, not just seek the fruit/retribution. Whatever we sow, we will surely reap. In practicing Buddhism, we must continuously strive to advance to a higher level, and work diligently in that direction.