

# Poems from a Dharma Life

Dr. Yutang Lin

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Dharma Friends of Dr. Lin



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# Choices of Words

*Sharp and extreme expressions tend to polarize situations;*

*Powerful oppression could provoke conflicts and frictions.*

*Plain words and harmonious speeches carried thorns none;*

*In acting like a dumb lies the wisdom of avoiding incidents.*

Comment:

Expressions used gone extreme; thorny to all sides. Animosity frequently incurred; hindrances unnoticeably grown in abundance. Energy and strength should be well treasured and preserved; incidents could be avoided to have risen lightly. Harmonious speech constantly employs plain words; through patience and tolerance all may share peace and quietude.

Written in Chinese on September 16, 2004

Translated on September 19, 2004

El Cerrito, California

# One-sided Statements

*Telling stories on others at will,  
Choosing on subjects to boast,  
Refraining from such practices to remain just,  
In silence there is less trouble but more deeds.*

Comment:

Ordinarily, people criticized others only based on hearsay. They readily accepted one-sided statements without realizing that the truth is still not clear. When it comes to talking about oneself, they would omit all flaws but exaggerate on merits. A practitioner with intention to be just had better avoid talking about personal matters. Carefully remain silent on such topics so as to stay free from entanglements. Instead, the attention and energy thus saved could be well spent on Dharma activities.

Written in Chinese on November 2, 2004

Translated on November 8, 2004

El Cerrito, California

## Free from Anger

*Anger is born of grasping and rises along the flow of situations.*

*With self-righteousness it would be even more difficult to abate.*

*Maintain continuation of pure thoughts to escape narrow biases.*

*Use kind words and gentle speeches to induce harmoniousness.*

Comment:

Anger rooted in grasping. With self-righteousness it would be aflame even more. After long years of Dharma practices one gradually escapes from narrow biases, and only then could one realize the difficulty to achieve and the preciousness of kind and gentle speeches, attitudes and behaviors. The first step in building the foundation for a world in peace rests in sentient beings' self-realization of the importance of cultivating harmony and accord. For the Study for the Cultivation of Harmony (the name of my study) this would be a very difficult task with a long way toward its realization, hence I should endeavor continuously.

Written in Chinese and translated on December 19, 2004, El Cerrito, California

## Free from Jealousy

*Used to saying to benefit all but privately wished for monopoly.*

*As soon as slightly felt inferior immediately became displeased.*

*Paying attention to one side and ignoring the rest, hardly balanced.*

*Sickness on the path should be cured in accordance with Dharma.*

*Each has individual karmic causes and conditions, 'tis hard to see.*

*Comparing and haggling are followed by jealousy and complaints.*

*To realize liberation from transmigration, don't grasp to rigid views.*

*Recognize delusions as such, and not to pursue their fabrications.*

*Sentient beings in Dharmadhatu are of limitless numbers and kinds.*

*Why does one forget the ocean but count only a few drips instead?*

*With mind so narrow one could hardly realize it's just self-torture.*

*Aspiring to follow Buddha's path one should approach Bodhi mind.*

***In Oneness of Dharmadhatu where could one find envy or aversion?***

***As grasping to one's self arose one recognized others as contenders.***

***Innocent others would all become competitors through imagination.***

***See through virtual scenarios to resume one's tranquility and harmony.***

Written in Chinese and translated on December 26,  
2004

El Cerrito, California

## Should Work Harder

*Deep sufferings and drastic calamities shot up frequently.*

*Wished to avert enraged waves and yet lacked the power.*

*At junctures of hardships one should not regress in distress.*

*A Bodhisattva's perseverance will be even more prominent!*

Comment:

In view of the profoundness of sufferings and the frequency of calamities in the world, some practitioner would raise the thought of giving up or regress. In light of the great Bodhi mind, gatherings of sufferings should be the causal conditions for a Dharma practitioner to make even more strenuous efforts. Endless salvation is to guide beings from within transmigration to liberation from sufferings, but not to escape from the world for personal immunity.

Written in Chinese and translated on January 13, 2005

El Cerrito, California

# Cultivating Harmony

*Views carry edges and corners, while intention  
And grasping yield stagnancy and hindrance.  
Sharp points not exposed intermittently,  
Harmony silently prevails in evenness.  
As calculations and considerations ceased,  
Where thoughts and measures never set foot,  
Sentient beings are originally in peaceful harmony,  
Through Dharma practice this is gradually sensed.  
Propagating Dharma to expound on this point,  
Encouraging all to join in enlightening practices.  
After the spring wind had caressed everywhere,  
Harmonious joy will melt the whole Dharmadhatu.*

Comment:

Let personal views and intentional grasping be withheld temporarily; germs of matters are extinguished to maintain outer harmony. Thoughts and intentions ceased and mind is open and clear; innate peace and harmony will gradually reveal and prevail after long-term Dharma practices. Odes on the path are presented to encourage all to engage in practices, like gentle winds slowly blowing over the earth. When sentient beings are enlightened the whole Dharmadhatu will melt in harmony.

Written in Chinese and translated on January 23, 2005  
El Cerrito, California

## Dependence on Computers

*As personal computer broke down all matters came to a halt.*

*All informations and instant communications suddenly ceased.*

*The perpetual adventures in cyberspace got temporary wake.*

*When will the illusive nature of evanescent life be recognized?*

Comment:

Frank, my second son, upon the delivery of his computer to a store for repair sighed and said, "All my works are in the computer and could not be continued, and all my perpetual instant communications with all my friends suddenly ceased; see how dependent I was on the computer!"

Daily we are besieged by sundry entanglements of worldly affairs of this evanescent life; do we have to wait till our final departure from them to become awakened?

Written in Chinese and translated on February 8, 2005

El Cerrito, California

## Never Irritable

*Sufferings and pains of sentient beings are of myriad sorts.*

*Mindful of their own welfare they constantly pray for help.*

*To thousand calls for help thousand responses are granted;*

*Compassionate mind remains merciful and is never irritable.*

Comment:

"While thousand places are supplicating all thousand places got responses." This is an often-quoted expression in praise of Guan Yin's miraculous responses to sentient beings' calls for help. In fact, usually for faithful ones their calls to Guan Yin for help would constantly arise as their situations in life demand, even for hundreds or thousands of times incessantly. Therefore, it is also quite appropriate to add the following praise in honor of Guan Yin's untiring compassionate mercy: "Thousand times of calling for help would receive thousand times of response." For those of us Buddhist practitioners, while we are serving sentient beings, in light of such compassionate mercy we would not dare to be even slightly arrogant but simply serve all with a humble and respectful attitude.

Written in Chinese and translated on February 15, 2005  
El Cerrito, California

# Flow

*All phenomena mixed in flow without any intermission.  
Conceptual settings are no match for the real situation.  
See through such delusions and don't remain beguiled.  
Grasp not even a thread to immerse into the one flow.*

Comment:

Real situations are beyond words; all things are mixed in one flow. Any idea grasped is illusive; carried away by all sorts of grasping one suffers in a crazy state. Cultivate the continuation of Buddha's name to clear dusts of mind. Attain freedom from ideas and transcend the sway of appearances, then re-immerge into the flow of all things in their originally pure state.

Written in Chinese on March 7, 2005

Translated on March 8, 2005

El Cerrito, California

## **Fine to Be Alone**

*Fluctuating life is like floating duckweed;  
Where could there be lasting companion?  
Do not chase after forms and grasp them;  
Original purity always prevails everywhere.*

Comment:

Peace of mind cannot depend on environment or preference because the course of one's life is like amid turbulent flows, one often finds oneself under uncontrollable circumstances. Only through adopting Dharma practices to maintain one's mind in a state of no-attachment to forms and no-grasping could one remain steadfast and calm in the original state of clear awareness even amid all sorts of unexpected sudden changes. The importance of such practices would become more and more obvious as senility, sickness and death approach. May all engage in Dharma practices right away and set up routine daily sessions lest one gets lost as matters arise.

Written in Chinese and translated on March 17,  
2005

El Cerrito, California

## Expression of Intentions

*Things many would eventually become burdensome.  
When forgotten possessing was as if not-possessing.  
In transition one temporarily keeps and handles them.  
Put them in circulation to keep mind open and fluent.*

Comment:

Things necessary are indeed only a few,  
Much accumulation vainly adds hurdles.  
Either forgotten or difficult to reach at,  
Entitled but rarely used as if not having.  
Body and things are all non-everlasting,  
Fleeting in charge, soon change hands.  
Make the most of things when suitable,  
Freely offer things to keep mind open.

Written in Chinese and translated on March 30,  
2005  
El Cerrito, California

## Possession and Comparison

*It's hard to put a hold on where grasping-to-self lies.  
Just watch ideas of possession or comparison arise.  
As soon as ill feeling sensed, drop the idea right away.  
Eventually through this way one's outlook will open up.*

Comment:

Dharma teaches that one should renounce grasping to the idea of a self. Nevertheless, for each individual it is usually very difficult to realize where one's own grasping lies, not to mention to be able to reflect and comprehend its vanity. In general, it would be easier to detect one's own grasping in the areas of "intending to possess" and "comparing with others." In order to practice renunciation of grasping one could begin with paying attention to these two areas; as soon as grasping is sensed drop it right away.

Written in Chinese on April 24, 2005

Translated on April 25, 2005

El Cerrito, California

## Self-grasping Impermanent

*Since Self is void, self-grasping is also vacuous.  
Its teasing play, nonetheless, remains incessant.  
Upon careful reflection it takes shape indefinite.  
Whenever recognized that's the moment to rest.*

Comment:

Buddha revealed that in reality there is no Self; inferring from this, self-grasping is also vacuous. As one's mind could not renounce grasping, grasping, even though vain, would constantly play a role. Upon careful observation of one's own self-grasping it is obvious that often there are many changes and evolutions. In order to cultivate renunciation of grasping one should realize that grasping is impermanent. (In other words, there is no one definite thing that is the grasping to renounce.) Under certain circumstances through attachment to forms grasping arises. Upon awareness of presence of grasping enlarge one's view and mind to leave it.

Written in Chinese on May 6, 2005

Translated on May 8, 2005

El Cerrito, California

# Great Gift

*Helping others to renounce grasping is a gift of deep consideration.*

*Difficult to give advice, hence one behaves with no strings attached.*

*No way to compel, it flows according to causes and consequences.*

*As bending willows caress the lake, ripples gradually spread away.*

Comment:

Dharma joy of liberation reveals itself only after grasping vanished. No greater gift than to help others renounce grasping. Words could hardly awaken people; one simply behaves free from entanglements. No way to compel; do not add branches and leaves. Willows swing as winds arrive; ripples sketch the lake.

Written in Chinese on May 28, 2005

Taipei, Taiwan

Translated on June 6, 2005

El Cerrito, California

## Going to Extremes

*In worldly affairs cases of going to extremes are often seen.*

*Why need to fry each other to the point of all are destroyed?*

*Simply practice tolerance and yield to others for three steps,*

*Then both sides can pass easily and it remains peace for all.*

Comment:

Whenever requests for prayer or Powa arrive there are often among the list victims of extreme behaviors. Then I couldn't help wondering why did they need to go to such points of no return that resulted in no recourses and deep suffering for all involved. If one could practice tolerance often in daily life, and behave in such a way that all sides will have some leeway left, then there would be no need for sharing such agony. May this short article serve as a precaution to remind readers so that suffering in the world may slightly reduce or harmony among people may prevail a bit more.

Written in Chinese on June 13, 2005

Translated on June 14, 2005

El Cerrito, California

## Return to Silence

*Right or devious is difficult to discern but easy to be misjudged.*

*Intentions and realizations vary as much as heaven and earth.*

*When wrongly accused a practitioner would return to silence.*

*Let the outcomes be determined by Buddhas and protectors!*

Comment:

As one proceeds on the path of Dharma practice it is inevitable that one would encounter misunderstandings, wrongful accusations, defamation, controversies, etc. Worldly views and practitioner's ways, bases of different views and their degrees of understanding of the Dharma, all vary to such an extent that meaningful communications would be only difficult if not impossible. At such junctures a practitioner had better return to silence, and continue only with Dharma practices, without wasting time and energy in trying to explain matters. Truth of matters and reasons must take long time to

gradually become clear. While human conflicts would be judged and settled in ways beyond human awareness by Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and Dharma protectors. May sincere and dedicated practitioners learn how to respond through this work, and not to move around after worldly tempos!

Written in Chinese and translated on July 2, 2005  
El Cerrito, California



<http://www.originalpurity.org/gurulin/b5files/a0/a0165.html>

## Path of Mind

*Practicing Dharma being a path of mind, passes are myriad.*

*Devils and hindrances are all products of one's recognition.*

*To complete the full course one needs to plunge in directly.*

*Single-minded on Bodhi will clarify all influences devious!*

Comment:

Practicing Dharma is basically a journey on the path of mind; how all sorts of hindrances arise and are to be resolved depend on how the practitioner views them and handles them in mind. As long as there is grasping and attachment to appearance in one's mind problems will arise as results of fabrication and entanglements. To arrive at the fruits of Buddhahood one needs to plunge in completely with a straightforward mind; single-minded on Bodhicitta without any other considerations will extinguish the heat of sorrows and enable the practitioner to safely cross over myriad difficult passes.

Written in Chinese and translated on August 19, 2005  
El Cerrito, California

## **My Bodhicitta Vows**

(May be Used for Dedication of Merits)

Dr. Yutang Lin

1. May virtuous gurus remain with us and those departed return soon!
2. May perverse views and violence soon become extinct, and Dharma spread without hindrance!
3. May all beings proceed diligently on the path toward Buddhahood and achieve the goal before death!
4. May the Great Compassion flourish in all beings and never regress until they reach perfect Buddhahood!
5. May the Great Wisdom thrive in all beings and never regress until they reach perfect Buddhahood!

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