

Poems from a Dharma Life

Dr. Yutang Lin

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Seal of Long Zai Si Fang

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Let Choose

***Dharma practice is up to one's choice of path;
The totality once harmonized any route works.
Forced by regulations into ever-narrower horn,
Resurrection from dead end would be difficult.***

Comment:

The goal of Buddhist teachings is for sentient beings to be no longer confined by concepts and forms but instead resume the original purity born of all in oneness. As to motivation and degree of engagement they vary with individuals and depend on personal inclination and understanding of the significance of Dharma. If the above is understood properly, then all sorts of practices may be taken as tools to facilitate one's comprehension of the harmony of all. And hence it should be up to each individual to choose the path that is more suitable to the real situation. When regulations are stipulated to set limits counter results of running into ever-narrower horn may turn up. Nevertheless, extremely desperate situations might drive people to search for paths of liberation, and then step onto practice path of awakening. Taking this possibility into consideration, even regulations and limitations might help people to become awakened, and hence need not be criticized.

Viewing the whole arena from harmony of all in oneness anything goes. In the Diamond Sutra, Tathagata says, "All things are all Buddha's things," because of this view.

Written in Chinese on April 16, 2003

Translated on April 17, 2003

El Cerrito, California

Natural

*Obeying causal conditions, things would be natural;
Giving up partial grasping no more causes to
gloom.*

*Upon opportune juncture give indication and
advice;*

*Running on separate courses, no need to bother
with.*

Comment:

Any move made, let it be in accordance with causal conditions. In the absence of longing and expectation, at ease with letting things come naturally. When the situation and the recipient are both appropriate give guidance and advice right at the juncture. Let people rush to various paths; in the absence of comments all remain in peace.

Written in Chinese on April 24,2003

Translated on April 28, 2003

El Cerrito, California

Open Clarity

*All sorts of precaution would still be incomplete;
Accidents would turn up, that's kind of a routine.
Recognize bugging worries as self-inflicted woe;
Settle mind in non-abiding to enjoy open clarity.*

Comment:

Who could predict how events would wind?
Trapped in anxious worrying is even worse.
Recognize self-inflicted woe as just useless,
Cease scattered thoughts to spread harmony.

Written in Chinese and translated on May 1, 2003
El Cerrito, California



Seal of "To benefit practice it all depends on self-reflection"
<http://www.originalpurity.org/gurulin/b5files/a0/a0200.html>

Relaxation in the Absence of Thoughts

*Suddenly freed from all thoughts in quietude,
Clear awareness without any mental activity.
Subtle tensions became apparent and noticed,
Then loosened without effort until relaxation.*

Comment:

All of a sudden mind freed from thinking, and only clear awareness remained. Subtle tensions in various parts of the body that were not noticeable, one by one became apparent and noticed. Upon being noticed they began to loosen on their own until the tension is no more.

Written in Chinese and translated on May 24, 2003
El Cerrito, California

Direction

***In chaotic worldly ways one easily gets lost;
Competing for self-interests brings no peace.
Even for charity insufficient ways and means;
Only pursuits of awakening everlasting good.***

Comment:

Worldly affairs are chaotic and uncontrollable; hence not few people get lost and could not find meaningful directions in life. Some would set as their goals the pursuit of self-interests, and got into unceasing entanglements and fighting that condemned their peace and harmony of body and mind. Some would consider helping others and promoting public welfare; nevertheless, due to insufficient ways and means or complicated situations, they became exhausted and saw only scanty and transient improvements. Only Buddhist teachings expound on original purity of all phenomena and provide practices that could lead to ultimate liberation from suffering. If one could follow the teachings by engaging in solid practices, then in the long run, one would not only attain peace and harmony of body and mind but also become capable of guiding others on the path of awakening to share the harmonic joys.

Written in Chinese and translated on May 31, 2003
El Cerrito, California

This Impermanent Moment

*At any instant one might die, why need to fight?
Causal matters are beyond control; don't worry!
Constantly care for universal suffering of beings;
Guidance of clarity would ultimately be helpful!*

Comment:

Usually people's awareness of impermanence does not include a keen sense that at any instant one might pass away. If one could maintain such a sharp awareness of impermanence, then one would not have the leisure or interest to engage in meaningless fighting or arguing. It is difficult to renounce completely cares about oneself; that is because one could not see clearly that sentient beings have no control over the evolution of their situations. In reality, such self-centered worries are inconsequential

Once the above views are comprehended, and one escapes from under the dominance of self-centeredness, then one should reflect constantly on all sufferings of all sentient beings. From the resulting clarity of mind one would naturally and spontaneously issue speeches and activities that are in accordance with awakening and liberation. Only such deeds would ultimately be beneficial to all beings.

Written in Chinese and translated on June 8, 2003
El Cerrito, California

Slipped through the Net

*Sentient beings are like fish swimming in oceans;
God of Death ceaselessly casts net at any second.
Staying alive now is like slipping through the net;
Remaining breaths are only for awakening
others.*

Comment:

A Buddhist friend informed me that their company just went through a wave of layoff. Only a minority survived, and all became gloomy. In my response I mentioned my usual practice of being mindful of impermanence. Realizing that death strikes constantly and incessantly, I think of my survival at this moment as a fish that has just slipped through the net of the God of Death. Remaining breaths are so precious that they should not be squandered away. May they be fully used for awakening deluded beings!

Written in Chinese and translated on July 29, 2003
El Cerrito, California

Seeing through Worldly Matters

Warm or cold reception could suddenly change drastically;

Illustrating worldly considerations to be indeed superfluous.

Single-mindedly proceed according to one's Bodhi intention;

No need to dance along and circle around in worldly games.

Comment:

Worldly people make their moves based on self-interests considerations. Change of attitude in their reception could suddenly happen, even from morning to evening. Consequently, particular considerations for others often turn out to be superfluous. One had better just treat all equally, and aim only at promotion of Bodhi goals. When this point is comprehended, one's mind would clear up right away.

Written in Chinese and translated on August 9, 2003

El Cerrito, California

Safe Passage

*None could constantly control the course of life;
Each grasps to some prejudice and dashes blind.
All matters of consequences will be faced alone;
Only by relying on a pure mind will one survive.*

Comment:

The enormous flux of worldly affairs has in reality no definitive control. And yet there is no lacking of blind blunders stemming from self-assurance or self-righteousness. Matters of real consequences would fall on one alone, without possibility of substitution. To go through the suffering of aging, disability, illness, and death, only a pure mind could remain peaceful. Realize this essential point early, and choose paths that are conducive to peace of mind.

Written in Chinese and translated on August 9,
2003

El Cerrito, California

Family of Karmic Creditors

Fighting over insistence is called "karmic creditors" in Taiwanese.

Minding only the knot of grudges to forget they are of one family.

In this world the spread of such epidemic is of such a great extent,

Whenever a deviation in recognition rises there is a split of family.

Comment:

Outsiders see them as of one family; inside the walls and barricades are profound. Where could no partisans be found? Those engaging in mutual attacks are often immediate neighbors. Brief and transient lives are wasted in vain affairs; seeing through such matters one realizes that people are just making their own lives miserable. Wise ones would renounce hatred and grudges all together; in yielding and accommodating a close and warm family may emerge.

Written in Chinese on November 3, 2003

Translated on November 4, 2003

El Cerrito, California

In Boiling Cauldron

Pattern of waves complicated causing the multitude to worry and irritate.

Sharp division and confrontation bring disasters for all involved to share.

Mind abides on Buddha's name to roam beyond such confusing situation.

In clear, even, compassionate and harmonious state, pray for peace stable.

Comment:

Current situation in such turmoil, people's minds could hardly be at ease. Trapped vainly in confrontations, only to enhance worries and irritations. Open one's eyes to look far and wide, and turn thoughts to move toward clarity and evenness. In compassionate and harmonious state pray for all universally, may each and every one transcend entanglements for all eternity.

Written in Chinese and translated on March 29, 2004

El Cerrito, California

Sincere and Trustworthy

*Sincere and trustworthy, ready to communicate;
Bases once collapsed, only antagonism remains.
When will people awake to say farewell to arms?
Worldly matters would soon all expire in a blink.*

Comment:

Human communication is based on sincerity and trust. When the bases collapsed, suspicion and fighting prevail. With or without good reasons, in a blink all would become naught. Wake up right away, not to be trapped in confusing commotions. A clear and even mind is still to be cultivated; peaceful and harmonious daily life needs to be much appreciated.

Written in Chinese on April 2, 2004

Translated on April 3, 2004

El Cerrito, California

Tides of Time

*Piling sand to build castles on beach of ocean,
Incessant tidal waves gradually render it ruins.
Worldly endeavors are of the same fragile sort,
Evolving in tides of time could hardly stay put.*

Written in Chinese and translated on May 2, 2004
El Cerrito, California



Seal of Long Hu Pu Ti Xin

Ceasing Intentions

*Conditional arising is subtle and wondrous
beyond conceivability;*

*Evolution of the totality is on courses that none
could control over.*

*Just as the more stirring the murkier it would be
in a pond of water;*

*Ceasing self-centered intentions would at once
unite all in harmony.*

Comment:

Deluded into attempting to change phenomena of the world,

The more stirring would only bring about the more confusion.

Simply being able to cease prejudicial grasping and preference,

The totality originally remained communicable and harmonized.

To return harmoniously into the sphere of all things,

Not to grasp to forms and create issues of all sorts.

Thought after thought without adherence to any one,

Right away there is transcendence of transmigration.

Written in Chinese on July 29, 2004

Melaka, Malaysia

Translated on August 10, 2004

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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