

發心與發展

——二〇〇二年四月國際佛光會第九次世界大會主題演說

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國際佛光會世界總會會長

各位貴賓、各位會員：

大家好！國際佛光會創會已然邁入第十一年了，今天大家不遠千里，從世界各地前來日本東京參加第九次世界會員大會，實在非常難得殊勝。

聯合國曾訂定一九六五年為「國際開發年」，「開發」是這個時代大家共同的任務。尤其廿一世紀是個科技進步，資訊發達的時代，一般人莫不以汲汲開發世間的經濟生活為要務，而我們佛教徒則以開發內心的真如佛性為根本。

國際佛光會是一個佛教的團體，因此我們不但要有「內在」的開發；我們同時也要有「外在」的開發。內在的開發就是開發我們的心地；外在的開發就是開發我們的世界。

例如，現在舉世矚目的太空總署，長期以來一直積極地開發外太空，人類不但登陸了月球，甚至發現火星、木星裡也有水源，也能提供植物的生存；甚至蘇聯和平號的衛星，在太空服務人類十多年後，才在去年於南太平洋功成身退。世界的能源專家，也不斷地探勘海底，開發海底石油的能源。現在的開發公司，更致力發展都市建設、開發山海新生地等工程。目前世界上著名的機場，包括香港過去的啓德機場、現在的大嶼山機場，還有新加坡的樟宜機場、曼谷的廊曼機場等，不就是興建在海埔新生地上的建築物嗎？

此外，現在的學校教育，有將「開發潛能」列為教學計畫者，還有文學家開發文學的領域，創作許多優美的詞章、動聽的詩歌，以及哲學家發揮對未來學的思惟、對人類慈悲心的提倡等，這些都是在開發我們的精神世界。由此可知我們人類文化一直都在不斷地進步中。

國際佛光會的會員也和社會大眾一樣，時時都在開發自己，以求自度；念念開發社會，以期度他。例如「佛光會員四句偈」說：

慈悲喜捨遍法界，惜福結緣利人天；
禪淨戒行平等忍，慚愧感恩大願心。

從這四句偈中，我們希望會員大眾能開發自己的慈悲心，開發自己的喜捨心，開發自己惜福結緣、慚愧感恩的心，甚至開發自心本性裡大願大力的禪心佛性，以期自利利他，自度度人。

此亦說明，本會自從十一年前創會之初，就在提倡自他開發、內外開發、事理開發。主要的是希望我們的家庭，不只是開發財富能源，更要重視開發人際關係的和諧；不只是希望升官發財，更要以福利社會人群為心志之所歸。

今年是國際佛光會創會屆滿十一周年，又值廿一世紀人類新紀元的初始，所以我們特別在國際佛光會第九次世界會員代表大會在日本召開的此刻，提出「發心與發展」的主題，希望今後人人在「發心」方面，要能發四種心：

- 一要「發慈悲心，怨親平等」；
- 二要「發增上心，定慧等持」；
- 三要「發同體心，人我一如」；
- 四要「發菩提心，自在圓滿」。

「發心」之外，還要有四種「發展」：

- 一要「發展人性的真善美好」；
- 二要「發展世間的福慧聖財」；
- 三要「發展人際的和樂愛敬」；
- 四要「發展未來的生佛合一」。

發心，就是建設自我；發展，就是建設世界。幫助自己要「發心」；幫助世間要「發展」。茲略述其義如下：

一、發心

佛教的百千法門中，「發心」最為重要。發心就是開發我們的心地。佛教將「心」比喻為「田」、為「地」；田地不開發，如何能播種？心地不開發，如何長養菩提？所以在佛門

的修持裡，都要我們發「四無量心」，發「四弘誓願」，並且實踐「四攝法」、「四加行」，以期自度度人。

省庵大師說：「入道要門，發心爲首；心發，則佛道堪成。」因此，希望我們會員大眾要發四種心：

(一)發慈悲心，怨親平等

「慈能與樂，悲能拔苦。」娑婆世間最大的缺陷，就是愛與恨的分歧、怨與親的疏離。其實，愛恨、怨親都是主觀的分別，例如自己身上的一塊爛肉，由於是自己的，因此就會好好的加以洗滌、治療、保護。本此心理，如果我們對於自己不喜歡的人，能夠「以愛止恨」、「以親處怨」，懂得人我乃是「同體共生」、「人我一體」，把你我的立場相互融和，進而開發自己的慈悲心，所謂「無緣大慈，同體大悲」，則一切眾生都是我們的父母親眷，都是我們的羅睺羅。

所以佛經說：「以慈止怨，以忍息諍」；基督教也說：「愛你的仇敵」；儒家則有「泛愛眾而親仁」的精神。佛陀更以叛徒提婆達多爲自己的逆增上緣，這一切都是慈悲心的展現。

慈悲是佛法的根本。《維摩經》說：「智度菩薩母，方便以爲父，一切眾導師，無不由是生。法喜以爲妻，慈悲心爲女，善心誠實男，畢竟空寂舍。」佛教的三藏十二部雖然有無量的法門與教義，但是皆以慈悲爲根本；《怖魔經》說：「一切佛法如果離開慈悲，則爲魔法。」

所謂「慈悲」，如《八大人覺經》說：「生死熾然，苦惱無量，發大乘心，普濟一切，願代眾生，受無量苦，令諸眾生，畢竟大樂。」自古以來，菩薩發心都是甘願爲眾生做牛做馬，爲眾生服務；如果沒有眾生，何來佛道呢？所以慈悲是通往佛道的一條捷徑。

慈悲不僅是理念上的瞭解，更應該從身體上付諸實踐。例如：地藏菩薩的「地獄度眾」、韋馱尊者的「三洲感應」、滄山靈祐禪師的「願做眾生的老牯牛」、布袋和尚的「撿拾人間的煩惱」等。歷代的諸佛菩薩、一切聖賢，那一個不是如觀世音菩薩一樣：以慈眼視眾生、以悲心度眾生，以慈悲來示現人間呢？

慈悲是淨化、昇華的愛。人與人之間，如果能換個立場，人我對調，爲對方著想，就能興起慈悲的念頭。一念慈悲可以化除貪欲，一念慈悲可以化除瞋恨，一念慈悲可以化除驕慢，一念慈悲可以化除怖畏。所謂「一人慈悲，眾皆伴侶」；「萬人慈悲，法界一如」。如果一個人實踐慈悲，大家都可以做我們的朋友；如果社會大眾都發起慈悲運動，普天之下自然也都能如兄弟手足一般的相親相愛了。

過去，佛陀的慈悲曾經讓眾生得到庇護安樂；現在希望我們的佛光會員，也能本著佛陀的慈悲心懷，先從自他怨親平等做起，能夠如《法華經》所說：一切男子是我父，一切女子是我母，一切年輕於我者，皆是我的兄弟姊妹；即使是冤家仇敵，我也可以化他、愛他，但不能恨他。以此慈心來引導全世界人類，邁向光明幸福的康莊大道。

(二)發增上心，定慧等持

「增上」就是增勝上進的意思。《成佛之道》說：「下求增上生，現樂後亦樂。」對於世間的物用，我們並不排斥、否定，因為人在世間上生活，自然就需要眷屬的愛敬、淨財的增長，以及福樂富貴的不斷增上，這才是人間生活的要求。

但是，我們光有外在的富有，這是不夠的，我們對於內在的精神，還必需透過「定慧等持」、「止觀雙修」，不斷的自我提昇，以期如「佛光會員信條」所說：「我們現證法喜安樂，永斷煩惱，遠離無明。」

談到「定慧等持」，在《六祖壇經》的〈定慧品〉中，惠能大師說：「定慧一體，本是不二。」「定」，就是要我們遇境不動心、不氣惱；「慧」，就是要我們運用得體，凡事如法，那就是智慧的妙用。如大顛禪師的侍者告訴大顛禪師說：對付韓愈要「先以定動，後以智拔」。

定與慧，離一非道。《涅槃經》說：「定多慧少，增長無明；慧多定少，增加邪見。」六祖大師則說：「常生清淨心，定心而有慧；於境上無心，慧中而有定；定慧等無心，雙修自性證。」

定與慧的關係，如金與器、如水與波、如燈與光，都能相互為用，不即不離。定與慧，如鳥之雙翼，如人之雙臂；如果「定慧等持」、「體用一如」，還有何事不能成辦呢？

因此，我們希望佛光會員，人人發增上心，定慧等持。

至於「發增上心」，在佛教裡認為，「五乘佛法」也是從人、天進入到聲聞、緣覺，而到達菩薩的目標，這就是增上；「四羅漢果」也是從須陀洹、斯陀含，而到阿那含、阿羅漢，依序增上；菩薩的五十一階位，也是從十信、十行、十住、十回向、十地，而到等覺、妙覺的佛果。所以，修行絕非一蹴可及，而是逐漸增上的。

現在的佛教，以在家信眾為多，信眾以家庭眷屬的愛敬為根本，如果把家庭的日用、社會的名聲、物質的利養，都排除在佛法之外，則信徒以何而生存呢？

所以，本會一直強調，出家僧眾應以發「出離心」為要；在家信眾只要發「增上心」即可。如果能夠從發「增上心」，漸漸的看破放下，而能激發菩提心，達於「定慧等持」，則何愁慈悲不能圓滿呢？

(三)發同體心，人我一如

世間上，最煩惱的事就是「差別」，諸如男女、貧富、知見、中外等各種差別。因為有差別，就有諸多的矛盾；有矛盾就會產生抗拒；彼此抗拒的世間，人我怎能和諧一如呢？因此，吾人要求世間的和平幸福，就必須泯除人我分別，發同體心，人我一如。

佛法昭示我們：「同體平等，人我一如」。黃山谷在「戒殺詩」說：「我肉眾生肉，名殊體不殊；原同一種性，只為別形軀。」想到如此，大地眾生皆和如來一樣，具有智慧德相，只因我人妄自分別，故而才從差別中生出世間的一切苦相。

世間上的眾生有種種性、種種相；然而相上雖有白種人、黃種人和黑人等種族的分別，但是「人同此心，心同此理」。例如，人人對於安全、和樂、平安、順遂，都是一樣的需求；既然如此，我們就不應該把自己的幸福建築在別人的痛苦之上，就不可以把自己的成就建築在別人的渺小上面。

孔子說：「己所不欲，勿施於人。」佛教主張要把禪悅法喜與世間大眾共同分享，要把世間上的一切眾生，都看成是自己的伴侶，都是我自己身心的一部分，都是我自己的生命所有。

說到眾生，在類別上，有「胎生、卵生、濕生、化生」；在形相上，有「若有色、若無色」；在精神思想上有「若有想、若無想」等等。眾生雖有千差萬別，但性靈和吾人都沒有分別。即使是大地山河、樹木花草，因吾人成佛，它也可以跟我們的自性連為一體。所以，一切眾生，自性真如都是平等的。

人類，與自己愈近者愈親，與自己愈遠者愈疏。你看，舉世的芸芸眾生，同國、同黨、同派、同事、同學、同鄉、同姓、同一家；所以有夫妻之情，有兒女之情，有父母之情。愈是近親，愈是感到和自我的關係密切，所以要建立同體的觀念，先要建立舉世人類都和我有相互的關係。例如，農夫種植米穀，我才有飲食；工人織布，我才有衣穿；甚至我們生活中的一切，那一樣不是社會大眾所供給的呢？如果沒有他們的心意、精神、勞苦，則我們便無法得生。所以離開了眾生，離開了因緣，「我」就不能單獨的存在；能夠建立人我眾生一如的思想，則在同體共生的理念下，還愁世界不會和平嗎？

(四)發菩提心，自在圓滿

菩提心就是犧牲奉獻，就是成就眾生，因此菩薩道的精神，就是發起「上弘下化」的菩提心。

實踐菩薩道的大乘行者，受持菩薩戒除了有防非止惡的攝律儀戒以外，更有勤修善法的攝善法戒，以及度化眾生的饒益有情戒。這顯示了菩薩行者不僅要消極地不作惡，更要積極地修一切善，乃至遍學一切法門，以度無邊眾生。

根據《菩薩善戒經》說：「有二因緣失菩薩戒，一者退菩提心，二者得上惡心。」因為菩薩發心是為廣度眾生，如果不發上弘下化的菩提心，便不能稱為菩薩。

歷代聖賢發菩提心，行菩薩道者，均可作為吾人修行的典範。如《本生經》載，佛陀在往昔行菩薩道時，曾不惜性命「捨身飼虎，割肉餵鷹」，以完成菩薩布施度的宏願；作忍辱仙人時，為歌利王割截肢體，以不生瞋恨而圓滿忍辱的修行。

此外，目犍連「為教殉難」、富樓那「蠻邦興化」、摩訶男「自沉河底救族人」、法珍比丘尼「斷臂募資刻藏」等，若非靠著菩提心發起的力量，如何能有此大願大行！如果沒有歷代的古德們捨身捨命行菩薩道，佛法命脈如何延續於後世？

菩提心不是一時的情緒，而是從生活中點滴的受持奉行；菩提心是不放棄一個眾生，不輕視一點小善；菩提心是以佛道為依歸，以真理為法侶。

佛光會的宗旨目標，就是要帶給眾生佛法，尤其是歡喜的佛法；是要讓每個人能夠改善自己，從煩惱的枷鎖中解脫出來，享受人生的歡喜，從物質和自我的束縛中解脫出來，享受群我共生的喜悅。

人生一期一期的生命，過去世、未來世因有隔陰之迷而無法掌握，但是一定要能掌握現世的歡喜。一個人如果擁有再多的金銀財寶、功名富貴，乃至美貌、學識等，卻不快樂、不歡喜，這樣的人生也是沒有意義的。因此在佛法裡提倡禪悅、提倡法喜，諸佛菩薩中更有歡喜佛、禪悅藏菩薩、歡喜地菩薩等。這說明在佛法裡如果沒有體會到佛法的歡喜，就是沒有宗教的體驗，這樣的信仰就有了危機。如果有了法喜的人，即使給人批評、漫罵、欺負，也不會失去歡喜，即使苦行，乃至誦經、拜佛、布施助人，也都會充滿了快樂歡喜。

所以，布施、修行，都是法喜、快樂的事；如果布施很苦、修行很苦，就不自在，不自在，就不是菩提心。人生如果不自在，也不圓滿；觀世音菩薩「遊諸國土」，遊，就是自在。因此，希望吾等佛光會員，人人都能效法諸佛菩薩的廣發菩提心，能夠「上求佛道」，也能「下化眾生」；能夠在菩提心中自在解脫，才能圓滿。

二、發展

國際佛光會自一九九一年二月一日在台灣創會，繼而翌年的五月十六日在美國成立世界總會。十年來佛光會一直本著既定的宗旨、目標、方向在發展。

佛光會的發展方向，就是希望我們每個人，從做好一個「佛光會員」，繼而建設「佛光人家」，接著發展「佛光社區」，到最後創造「佛光淨土」為終極目標。

創造佛光淨土既是佛光人努力發展的目標，因此我們希望未來的佛光會，應該加強檀講師、檀教師、檀導師的訓練，加強佛光會員的國際宏觀，大家一起來開發世間的能源，更一起來開發內心的寶藏，希望大家朝著下列四個方向，努力實踐。

(一)發展人性的真善美好

佛光會自創會以來，一再的提倡文化、教育、慈善、共修，尤其在有關信眾的教育方面，我們在各地舉辦讀書會、短期出家修道會、各種講習會、各種成長營，甚至青少年的進修班、交響樂團，還有佛光青年團、佛光成人禮等。

我們在文化、教育、公益上給予信徒的教育，主要就是要大家開發真善美的品德。因為現在的世間，家庭裡的份子，彼此缺乏真情，所以家不成家；社會上，群我之間缺少善行，所以產生人我決裂。由於人類不把真如佛性裡的美好，表現到人間來，大家共榮、共有、共好，反而到處充滿了貪瞋嫉妒，猙獰醜陋，失去了真善美好的因緣，這個世間還有什麼可愛的呢？

真善美好，是人間最重要的目標，也是人間最需要開發和建設的境界。《妙法聖念處經》說：「眾善應可愛，如父復如母；美善體安然，能離於喧爭。美善人天喜，美善增勤勇；美善眷屬多，美善三塗離。美善息諸惡，美善離煩惱；能棄語過非，應修諸眾善。」

真善美好的人生，是天上、人間，大家一致共同追求的目標。為了開發人間的真正美好，我們希望本會大眾，今後應該在身口意上，依循佛陀的開示：

1. 說話時，要說真語、實語、如語、不異語、不誑語等令人受用的好話。（《金剛經》）
2. 做事時，要做善行、懿行、美行、利行等有益於人間的好事。（《阿含經》）
3. 存心時，要存慧心、道心、悲心、願心等祝福別人的好心。

說好話、做好事、存好心，這也正是本會所提倡的「三好運動」。本會長久以來雖然一直都以推動三好運動來發展人性的真善美，並且將此視為發展的重要任務，但是總覺得還是

不夠。因此，我們更希望政府當局，乃至全世界的有識之士，對於有關開發人性真善美好的建設，都應該給予獎勵，給予宣揚。以期風氣所及，讓我們的人間社會，到處所聽到的都是美好的聲音，到處所見到的都是真誠感人的事情；到處所想到的都是為人服務的善事。

我們希望全體佛光會員，大家率先動員，大家一起來學習發展，讓我們推己及人，創造一個和諧美好的人間，讓大家都擁有一個真善美好的人生。

(二)發展世間的福慧聖財

世間上，人人都希望發展自己的事業，發展自己的財富。但是，我們尤其希望大家能重視福慧事業的發展，重視共有聖財的發展。

說到財富，有「狹義的財富」，諸如金錢、房屋、土地、股票等；有「廣義的財富」，例如健康、智慧、人緣、信用、道德等。

除此以外，還有「有價的財富」，譬如聲望、名譽、成就、歷史；也有「無價的財富」，比如人格、良知、真心、本性等。乃至有形的財富、無形的財富；現世的財富、來世的財富；個人的財富、大眾的財富；物質的財富、精神的財富；一時的財富、永遠的財富等等。

所有的財富，要能與福慧建立關係；福慧是人生最究竟圓滿的財富。佛陀是福慧具足的兩足尊；福慧事業不能發展，人生就不能圓滿。所以我們呼籲大家，爲了要福慧具足，要發展聖者的財富。

所謂聖者的財富，例如般若禪定的財富、法喜禪悅的財富、慚愧感恩的財富、慈悲智慧的財富；也就是淨財、善財、法財。

《諸法集要經》說：「珍寶有散壞，法財用無極；唯所修善法，百千生相逐。」真正的財富，不一定要看銀行裡的存款，也不一定是指土地、房屋、黃金、股票，這些都是五家所共有，個人無法獨得；人生唯有發展信仰、滿足、歡喜、慚愧、人緣、平安、健康、智慧等，才是真正的擁有世間的福慧聖財。這些財富不但現世受用，來世還可以受用；不但一時受用，還可以終身受用；不但一人受用，還可以大眾受用。

因此，人不要只看重個人的財富，也要創造、發展共有的財富。甚至，你固然可以擁有私有的財富，但你更要懂得享受共有的財富，例如陽光、空氣、淨水等。你懂得的話，宇宙山河、公園道路，都是我們能享有的財富，我們還會貧窮嗎？

人爲什麼來到人間？人不是爲了受苦而來，也不是爲了鬥爭而來；是爲了享受人間的福慧，享受人間的資源，享受自心的平靜而來。但是這一切，也要靠我們自己來發展，才能獲得。

(三)發展人際的和樂愛敬

世間不是我們任何一個人的，世間是由很多個人所共同組織成的社會，大家在社會裡共求營生。

世界上幾十億的人口，大家要想和樂愛敬的共同生存，當然就要培養人際之間的關係，發展人我之間的需要。所以就有人在物質上發展富麗堂皇的都市，在經濟上發展銀行貨幣的流通，在感情上發展婚姻眷屬的關係，在生活上發展衣食住行的需要。

但是，在社會的各種建設當中，也有一些不當的發展，例如，舞廳、酒家、賭場、幫派等場所或組織的設立，提供人們在追求五欲之樂，追求感官刺激的同時，也讓內在深層的性靈生活跟著墮落、沉淪了。所以社會出現了畸形的發展，人際之間也造成了許多的矛盾、許多的糾紛；也因此使得和樂愛敬的人際關係，在此世風日下、世道紛雜的混亂時刻，更加顯示出它的重要性，更加的需要吾人去為它重新估定價值。

過去，基督教發揚博愛，墨子發揚兼愛，儒家發揚仁義，歷代諸子百家、宗教學者，莫不希望在思想、學術上發展出另外的一套方案，以充實人際之間和樂愛敬的關係。

但是，從各種發展的結果看來，開發人類賴以維持社會秩序的和樂愛敬之美德，還是有待佛教來負擔起責任，因為佛教講「心」，心才是一切善美品德的源頭。

一般開發世間的能源，那只是物質上的發展；發展內心的寶藏，那才是真正給人超脫的方便。例如，國際佛光會為了淨化人心，多年來一直發展「把心找回來」系列活動；為了促進社會的健全和諧，我們推展「七誠運動」；為了找回人性的尊嚴，我們提倡「慈悲愛心人運動」；為了群我關係的互助，我們舉辦「三好運動」等。

歷屆的佛光會世界會員大會，我們相繼提出「歡喜與融和」、「同體與共生」、「尊重與包容」、「平等與和平」、「圓滿與自在」、「自然與生命」、「公是公非」等主題演說，目的就是希望發展一個和樂愛敬的社會人間。

此外，我們主張「尊重會員大眾，來時歡迎去時相送」；我們提倡「實踐生活修行，隨時隨地心存恭敬」，也都是為了和諧美好的人我關係。

我們更希望會員大眾，人人學習佛陀「示教利喜」的精神，不斷開發自己內在的能源。我們要學習《法華經》中常不輕菩薩「我不敢輕視汝等，汝等皆當作佛」的尊重；我們要實踐普賢菩薩「隨喜功德」等深弘誓願；我們要效法古德先賢們「為大法也，何惜生命」之堅忍不移的精神。希望我全體佛光會員，都能朝此目標發展，並臻完成。

(四)發展未來的生佛合一

現在的時代，對人間的發展可以說一日千里，大家對未來的發展，更是寄以殷切的關注。

「未來學」是這個時代的熱門學科，大家的眼光都望向未來，注意未來。例如，現在的青少年都懂得要有「生涯規畫」，現代的長者也在計畫如何「安度餘年」，以及各國政府也有五年計畫、十年計畫，甚至有人在研究十年後、百年後的世界。可見對未來的發展，已經成爲這個時代重要的任務。

過去，佛教也總是鼓勵信徒要修好來生；來生就是未來。現在的科學家，已經在預備未來要佔領太空，因此現在不但有人到月球預購土地，甚至有人計畫移民其他星球。人類對於宇宙世界，愈來愈有更大的發展，愈來愈具有宏觀的思想。

自古以來，一般普通的民眾，都希望開發天堂，以供自己長住久安；佛教徒也開發兜率內院，寄望親近彌勒尊佛，時常聽經聞法，以期成佛。還有許多佛教大乘行者，立志開發東方琉璃淨土，開發西方極樂世界，以期能夠「生佛一如」。

所以，佛教對「未來」，已經有數百千年的發展經驗，現在經過科技的文明，經過各種文化的啓發，對於發展未來的理想，更是愈來愈濃厚。像佛教徒的合掌、禮拜，都是希望藉此與諸佛菩薩接心，但現在的佛教弟子，他的願望不只是接心，而希望與諸佛菩薩長相左右，達到生佛合一的目標。

我們閱讀經文，都看到東方世界、南方世界，各處世界裡的諸佛菩薩和他的子民如何和諧、如何安樂。這已經不是經文上的記載，這也是我們人類應有的發展理念。

在《佛性論》有一段記載：「由般若故，成就佛法；由大悲故，成熟眾生。由二方便，住無住處，無有退轉，速證菩提，滅五過失，生五功德，是故佛說一切眾生皆有佛性。」

生佛合一，這不但不是遙不可及的夢想；甚至心佛眾生，本來就是等無差別的真理。所以，我們希望佛光會員們，能夠在現世的人間，開發我們的慈悲智慧，開發我們的真如佛性；只要我們能夠時時擁抱真理，只要我們能夠永作佛國的一員，那就是與佛合一了。

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綜上所說，「發心與發展」實在是每一個現代人，不僅對自己、對家庭、對社會、對國家，甚至是對全宇宙人類應有使命。

因此，我們希望從今以後，大家不要辜負了佛教裡「發心」這麼美好的用語，不要讓它成爲老生常談的空話，希望人人都能真正地「發慈悲心，怨親平等」；「發增上心，定慧等持」；「發同體心，人我一如」；「發菩提心，自在圓滿」。

「發展」，也不要讓它成爲社會上發展物欲的專屬，希望人人真正做到：「發展人性的真善美好」；「發展世間的福慧聖財」；「發展人際的和樂愛敬」；「發展未來的生佛合一」。

發心，人人要發，刻不容緩；發展，即時行動，期能早日圓成。

To Resolve and To Develop

To Resolve and To Develop

*9th General Conference of the
Buddha's Light International Association
Tokyo, Japan, April 28, 2002*

Ven. Master Hsing Yun

Dear Guests and Members,

My warmest welcome to everyone and in particular to those who have travelled from the far corners of the globe. The BLIA has now stepped into its eleventh year. We are exceedingly honored to have your presence here in Japan to attend the Ninth General Conference of BLIA.

1965 was declared by the United Nations as the “Year of Development,” and clearly world development is a responsibility that should be equally shared by all in this world. We are now in the 21st Century, a period when technology and communication is advancing at a rapid pace and everyone is concerned with the tasks of developing the world economy. However, the main task for Buddhists in this new millennium will involve the discovery and development of our inherent Buddha nature.

The BLIA is a Buddhist organization. Therefore we must nurture “ internal” as well as “ external” development. “ Internal” development is the active disclosure of our inner nature and mind whereas “ external” development refers to the beneficial advancement of our world.

Take for example the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) of the USA, which has for a long time been actively involved in the exploration of outer space. Its achievements include lunar landings and the discovery of life-supporting moisture on Mars and the basic compounds of life in the atmosphere of Jupiter. The Russian Mir Space Station splashed down into the South Pacific Ocean after serving more than ten years of space research. We have energy experts exploring the deep seas for oil and other resources. Similarly there are

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many corporations involved in development of the infrastructure of cities as well as sea and mountain reclamation. Other notable engineering achievements include for example the new airports in Hong Kong, Singapore, and Bangkok.

Today, many educational systems are actively encouraging the development of “gifted” students. We also have literary scholars who are writing exquisite verses and poetry and philosophers who publish their thoughts on the future including those who actively advocate compassion. All of these are a part of our efforts to help develop and improve our cultural and spiritual existence.

Members of the BLIA should constantly act in accordance with other members of society to develop themselves. We should have a socially conscious mind, and always be on the look-out for opportunities to enlighten ourselves as well as others. The “Four Verses of the BLIA” summarize the hopes and aims of all BLIA members:

May palms be joined in every world in kindness, compassion, joy and giving,

May all beings find security in friendship, peace and loving care,

May calm and mindful practice seed of patience and equanimity deep,

May we give rise to spacious hearts and humble thoughts of gratitude.

Through the understanding of these verses, we hope that our members can constantly develop their compassion, generosity, blessings, human relationships, humility, and gratitude. We must rediscover our self-nature with the ultimate goal of benefiting and liberating both ourselves and others.

In the eleven years since the founding of the BLIA, we have steadfastly advocated the mutual development of our body and mind as well as acting according to facts and logic. We should aim not only for financial prosperity in the family, but also for harmonious relationships with others. Our objectives in life should not be restricted to power and fortune, but we should also work towards the general benefits of society.

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In this Ninth BLIA General Conference in Japan, we would like to celebrate the new millennium as well as the eleventh birthday of the BLIA by promoting the theme “ To Resolve and To Develop.” It is hoped that in the future, each of us can make the following four resolutions:

(1) Resolve to be kind and compassionate, and treat equally both the beloved and the repugnant.

(2) Resolve to strengthen our minds by being steadfast and wise in our faith.

(3) Resolve to develop a fellowship of equality and coexistence.

(4) Resolve to achieve a Bodhi mind and perfect enlightenment.

These four resolves should also be complemented by the following developments:

(1) To develop truth, goodness and perfection in human nature.

(2) To develop the wealth of blessings, wisdom, and virtue in this world.

(3) To develop harmony, joy, love, and respect in the human race.

(4) To develop oneness between self and the Buddha.

1. To Resolve

Among the many paths in Buddhism, our “ resolve” is the singularly most important path. To resolve is the beginning of the cultivation of our minds. Buddhism views our minds as open fields waiting for seeds to be sowed. It emphasizes the importance of a proper cultivation that is required to nurture our path to enlightenment. Therefore, we should resolve to practice the “ Four Immeasurable Minds,” “ Four Great Vows,” “ Four Embracing Virtues,” and “ Four Disciplinary Processes” so that we and others can be liberated.

Master Sheng-An once said, “ Resolve is the first important step in Buddhism and the ability to maintain this resolve will eventually lead to enlightenment.” We as members of the BLIA should undertake the following four resolutions.

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(1) Resolve to be kind and compassionate, and treat equally both the beloved and repugnant.

“ Kindness leads to joy while compassion leads to the end of suffering.” The greatest flaws in our world lie in our discrimination between love and hate, and between intimacy and resentment. However the differences between love and hate, as well as intimacy and resentment often arise on our sentiments. An open sore will be regarded differently depending on where it is found. If a sore is found on your own body you would carefully cleanse, treat and nurse it. Similarly, if our treatment of our foe can be based on love rather than hate, and on the recognition of oneness among all beings, it will not be difficult to achieve universal harmony. If we truly believe in “ unconditional kindness and universal compassion,” it will be easy to accept that all beings are precious and related to one another.

Buddhism encourages us to replace enmity with kindness and stop conflict with tolerance. Christianity tells us to “ love thy enemy,” whereas Confucianism teaches “ universal love and benevolence.” The Buddha set an example that it is possible to create conditions for spiritual advancement by showing kindness and compassion to his rival, Devadatta.

Unquestionably, kindness and compassion are fundamental to all the teachings of Buddhism which are comprised of the Tripitaka and the Twelve Canons. As is stated in the *Vimalakirti-nirdesa Sutra*, “ Dharma becomes heresy when it is practiced without kindness and compassion.”

According to the *Sutra of the Eight Realizations of Great Beings*, “ Life and death are like flickering flames, and suffering is endless. Take the Mahayana Vow to befriend all things. Vow to take on the illimitable suffering of sentient beings, and lead them all to ultimate bliss.” Since the beginning of time, Bodhisattvas have resolved to toil and work for the benefit of all living beings because they recognize the causal link between living beings and enlightenment. Therefore, it stands to reason that kindness and compassion are a direct route to enlightenment.

It is pointless to merely talk about kindness and compassion without actually

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putting them into practice. In fact, the Buddhist scriptures contain many examples of how kindness and compassion were practiced. The more notable examples are the vows that were made by various bodhisattvas and patriarchs, including those of Ksitigarbha bodhisattva, who resolved to liberate all beings from hell before attaining Buddhahood. These saints all resolved to use kindness and compassion to bring salvation to the world.

Kindness and compassion are the purest and highest forms of love. If we can be more considerate and prepared to exchange places with others, kindness and compassion will become a part of one's nature. In this way we will be able to eradicate greed and craving, hatred and bitterness, pride and arrogance, and fear and consternation. It was once said, "Personal kindness and compassion bring forth companionship, and communal kindness and compassion result in social unity." In other words, the practice of kindness and compassion by one person will enhance his relationship with others. Better still, if kindness and compassion are practiced in society, then we will be rewarded with an environment of harmony and joy.

In his time, the Buddha had brought peace and happiness to all beings through his kindness and compassion. We hope that members of the BLIA can follow his example by taking the first step of treating others as oneself. The Lotus Sutra teaches us to regard all beings as part of our own family irrespective of whether they are intimate or obnoxious to us. We must show others our love, and ultimately, through our compassion, take all humanity along the path of light and blessings.

(2) Resolve to strengthen our minds by being steadfast and wise in our faith.

To "strengthen" means to improve and to progress. *The Path to Buddhahood* states, "through the improvement of our livelihood, we can enjoy both material and spiritual joy." In other words, we should not reject and deny the pursuit of personal necessities, affection and wealth through proper means. However, these are only superficial goals and should be supplemented simultaneously by being steadfast and wise in our faith. We must constantly strive to elevate ourselves through the practice of meditation and observation, thus com-

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plying with one of the guidelines of the BLIA: “ We live in the peace and joy of the Dharma. We disentangle ourselves from suffering and ignorance.”

The Sutra of Hui-Neng says, “ steadfastness and wisdom are one and the same.” “ Steadfastness” is our mind’ s ability to remain composed and undisturbed by external circumstances. “ Wisdom” is the ability to think and act according to the Dharma. A follower once responded to his master’ s question by suggesting that to solve a problem one must be steadfast and composed, and once a scheme is devised it must be acted upon with wisdom.

To be without either steadfastness or wisdom is a major departure from the Dharma. The *Nirvana Sutra* states, “ Too much steadfastness leads to ignorance and too much wisdom leads to erroneous views.” Master Hui-Neng preached that steadfastness and wisdom arise from the practice of pure thoughts, and that the ability to remain composed and calm in all situations will lead to the experience of our self nature.

There is no demarcation separating steadfastness and wisdom. The talk of one is directly related to the other, just like the ocean and the waves, light and a lamp, two wings of a bird, and two arms of a man. There is nothing that is not achievable if we make good use of our steadfastness and wisdom.

As members of the BLIA we must therefore resolve to improve our faith by being steadfast and wise. Buddhism has outlined a number of ways in which we can progressively improve our faith. We can progressively improve ourselves through the ranks of the “ Five Mahayana Vehicles” of human, deva, Sravaka, Pratyeka-buddha and Bodhisattva. Similarly the enlightenment of a Theravada Arhat and a Mahayana Bodhisattva is achieved progressively through four stages and fifty-one stages respectively. Therefore, do not expect our own enlightenment to come all of a sudden; it will most probably be achieved in gradual elevations.

Today’ s Buddhist communities are composed mainly of devotees and their families whose relationships are founded on mutual respect and affection. It would be unreasonable to expect our devotees to exclude and reject the normal pursuit of jobs, reputation, and general enjoyment of their lives just because they are

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Buddhists. As laymen, we cannot follow the examples of the monastics by retiring from the mundane world. We can however, strengthen our own resolve by learning more about detachment and by enhancing our Bodhi mind through steadfastness and wisdom. Through a combination of kindness and compassion, we will be able to experience perfect satisfaction and an understanding of the Truth.

(3) Resolve to develop a fellowship of equality and coexistence.

Most troubles in the world arise out of discrimination, whether this is between male and female, rich and poor, knowledgeable and ignorant, and domestic and foreign. As long as there is discrimination, there will be contradiction and dispute. How can true harmony exist in this world if we are constantly faced with disputes and arguments? World peace and happiness can be achieved only through the eradication of prejudice and the advancement of equality and fellowship.

The Dharma proclaims to the devotees the importance of equality in a community. It restrains us from killing by stating that, “ the flesh of humans and animals differ only in names. All living things possess the same true nature, and are only different in shapes and sizes.” In truth, all living beings are no different from the Buddha, possessing wisdom and virtuous appearance. It is only our discriminatory ways that created the sufferings in this world.

Our human race may have evolved into different colors, shapes, and sizes. However, irrespective of the colour of their skins, essentially they all have similar goals in life. These goals generally include personal safety, harmony, happiness, and a comfortable and easy life. Therefore, we should never base our own needs and happiness on the loss and suffering of others. Likewise, we should not show off our achievements by emphasizing the failures of others.

Confucius once said, “ Do not do to others what you do not want to be done to you.” Buddhism always advocates the sharing of Dharma joy with everyone in the world. We must look upon all living beings as our companions, as part of our body and mind, and as an integral part of our lives.

It is true that living things may come into existence in many different ways and are of varying forms and appearances. Some may have conscious thoughts while others may appear to possess little to no intelligence. However, each of these

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living beings does have a consciousness that is no different from our own. Our eventual enlightenment can be linked through the likes of mountains and streams, and trees and flowers, which can be regarded as integral parts of our self-nature. The ultimate truth is that all living beings possess a self-nature of neither more nor less importance.

How humans feel about each other often depends on how closely we are related to each other. Take a look around us and we can find that we are often associated with people of the same country, same political party, same office, same school, same hometown, same surname, and same family. We will invariably find that the relationships between husband and wife, father and son, and brother and sister are often accompanied by great emotional attachments. In order to establish a common fellowship in this world, we must recognize that each person is somehow related to and dependent on each other. For example we will starve unless farmers do the planting and harvesting. Similarly, we will get cold if no one works in mills and clothing factories. Without the contributions and hard work of everyone in the community, our lives will be less comfortable and full of hardship. Nowadays, it is inconceivable to think that it is possible to exist without considering the contributions made by each and every person in society. If we can establish a fellowship of equality, while working under the principle of oneness and coexistence, it is hard to imagine a world without true peace.

(4) Resolve to achieve a Bodhi mind and perfect enlightenment.

A Bodhi mind (*bodhicitta*) signifies the determination for self sacrifice so that all beings may be liberated. This is an aspiration of a Bodhisattva who has resolved to achieve full and complete enlightenment for the benefit of all living beings.

In the Mahayana tradition, those following the Bodhisattva path will practice in accordance with the precepts, the avoidance evil, as well as the diligent application of Dharma and the assistance to all beings. Clearly, these practitioners are more than just trying to avoid committing bad karma. In fact they are acting proactively to learn as much as they can about the Buddha's teachings so that they

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will be well-prepared to enlighten others.

In the *Sutra of the Virtuous Bodhisattva Precepts*, it is said that “ the two ways to violate the Bodhisattva precepts are (i) the loss of the Bodhi mind and (ii) the accumulation of deluded thoughts.” It must be understood that a Bodhisattva has vowed to enlighten all beings, and if he loses his resolve to practice accordingly, he is no longer a Bodhisattva.

There are many examples set by past sages and patriarchs to show how to practice with a Bodhi mind. For example, according to the *Jataka Sutra* which records the lives of the Buddha before his enlightenment, he sacrificed his body by feeding himself to a tiger and an eagle. This was his way of accomplishing his great vow concerning the paramita of “ giving.” Similarly, in one of his other lives, the Buddha willingly allowed King Kaliraja to cut his body without feeling resentment or hatred, thus accomplish his great vow on the paramita of “ forbearance.”

There are many examples of the Buddha’s disciples and monastics who sacrificed themselves for the benefit of others and for the propagation of the Dharma. *Maudgalyayana* sacrificed his life for Buddhism, *Purna* put his life at risk by vowing to preach Buddhism to barbarous people and, in order to print the Buddhist Tripitaka and Twelve Canons, *Bhiksuni Fa-zhen* severed one of her arms to raise funds. It is hard to imagine that these great vows can be accomplished without the strength and resolve of a Bodhi mind. It is also through the sacrifices made by these saints and sages that we are able to benefit from the teachings of the Buddha today.

It should be strongly emphasized that the resolve to develop a Bodhi mind should be regarded as a long-term aspiration. Once such a vow has been made, we should apply ourselves diligently in every aspect of our lives, no matter how insignificant. A person with a Bodhi mind should not abandon even a single living being or disregard the smallest virtuous deed. A Bodhi mind requires us to follow the Dharma path and consider the truth as our companion.

The objectives of the BLIA are to introduce the Dharma to all beings, in particular the Dharma that brings forth happiness and joy. The aims is to encourage

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continued improvement of our characters so that we may be emancipated from our troubles and sufferings, and also to better our quality of life by releasing us from our egos and material desires. As a result, we will be able to appreciate the joy of fellowship with other beings.

We all go through different rebirth cycles, and it is impossible to control our past and future lives. However, we must all at least try to master our present lives. Life is meaningless for an unhappy person even if he or she possesses good looks, vast knowledge, wealth, and power. That is why Buddhism advocates joy in meditation and happiness in learning about the Dharma. We are not truly reaping the benefits of Buddhism if we are not conscious of the delight experienced during this learning process. For without “Dharma joy,” we will be adversely affected by the abuse and criticism of others, or distracted by discomfort and hardship when we are praying, chanting, or assisting others.

Therefore we can always find joy when giving and practicing the Dharma. On the other hand, if we do not feel at ease or happy in our practice, we may not have the right resolve for a Bodhi mind. We cannot achieve perfection in our practice if we do not feel completely at ease. I hope that BLIA members can follow the example shown by Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva to be completely at ease whenever practicing the Bodhi way. Perfect enlightenment is achievable if we can liberate ourselves through learning and practicing while helping others to be aware of the Dharma.

2. To Develop

Since its founding in Taiwan on the 1st of February 1991, and the subsequent inauguration of the World Headquarters in the USA on the 16th of May in the following year, the BLIA has constantly developed its objectives and goals.

The BLIA's development plan is progressive. It starts off from a personal level that encourages goodness through which BLIA members can develop and improve by themselves. This is to be followed by the creation of BLIA families, society and finally a Buddha's Light Pureland.

In order to achieve our final goal of a Buddha's Light Pureland, it is neces-

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sary to promote the training of lay Dharma teachers and lecturers. It is also necessary to broaden the international perspective of our members so that we are more aware of the importance of efficient development of the world's resources as well as our own spiritual abilities. I hope that each one of us can act according to the following four directions:

(1) To develop truth, goodness and perfection in human nature.

Since its founding, the BLIA has repeatedly emphasized the importance of culture, education, charity, regular chanting services, and particularly the instruction of proper practices for devotees. In different parts of the world, the BLIA has organized various study groups, short-term monastic retreats, seminars, children's camps, youth training classes, orchestras, as well as BLIA Young Adults Divisions and Adulthood ceremonies.

The purpose of these cultural, educational and community welfare activities is to provide our members with the necessary training for a truthful, good and perfect character. In this world today, we often find that families lack intimate feelings. Likewise in today's society, one rarely finds the desire to perform kind deeds for others, which results in a failure in communication. What is there to look forward to in this world when it is full of greed, jealousy, violence, and foulness? We humans have failed to discover the goodness that is inherent to our true nature, and are reluctant to share with others all that is honorable and good.

It is most important that we establish and develop an environment of truth, kindness, and perfection in this world. It is stated in a sutra that, "Universal goodness is like parental love. Kindness and perfection will bring forth physical well-being, mental peace, improved diligence, and better human relationships. They will also eradicate evil, affliction, and human faults. That is why we should practice universal goodness."

No matter where we are, we should all try to set truth, goodness, and perfection as our ultimate goals. This is achievable if, from this day forward, we act according to the Buddha's teachings:

a) To be truthful and factual in our speech without being ambiguous or flattering. (as is stated in the *Diamond Sutra*)

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b) To act with goodness, virtue, benevolence and kindness for the benefit of mankind. (as is stated in the *Agama Sutra*)

c) To think with wisdom, righteousness, compassion, and great vows with blessings.

To speak, act and think correctly are the “The Three Benevolent Acts” recognized by the BLIA as the path to acquire truth, goodness, and perfection in our character. However, the result will be significantly magnified if the governments and all those concerned with the enhancement of human nature are prepared to adopt the same policy. One way to achieve this is to publicly reward and encourage those who are prepared to practice truth, goodness and perfection. In this world, we should be able to hear good words being said, to feel the sincerity in people’s actions and to perceive the good intentions in everyone’s thoughts.

We hope that all BLIA members can take the lead by learning how to promote the development of a harmonious world so that we can lead a true, good, and perfect life.

(2) To develop the wealth of blessings, wisdom, and virtue in this world.

In this world, everyone would like to develop his or her own career and fortune. But most of all we hope that everyone can consider the importance of developing their future assets in blessings, wisdom, and virtuous wealth.

There are different kinds of wealth. In the narrow sense, wealth refers to money, buildings, land and stock. When considered in a broad sense, it refers to health, intelligence, relationships, credibility, and morality.

Wealth can also be defined as “priced wealth” such as prestige, reputation, and social and historical achievement; or “priceless wealth” such as integrity, conscience, loyalty, and character. Wealth can be tangible, intangible, present, future, personal, communal, physical, spiritual, temporary, or permanent.

If we can build our wealth upon a foundation of blessings and wisdom, we will be able to enjoy a most satisfactory life, for blessings and wisdom are the ultimate wealth that a person can possess. A perfect example can be personified in

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the image of the Buddha. Therefore we should call upon everyone to develop these “ sagacious wealth.”

Examples of sagacious wealth are those acquired through prajna meditation, Dharma joy, humility and gratitude, and kindness and compassion. These forms of wealth are pure, good and transcend all physical boundaries.

According to the *Chu Fa Chi Yao Sutra*, “ Worldly treasures have their limitations, whereas Dharma treasures are boundless in their usage. Through virtuous practices we shall inherit these timeless Dharma treasures.” Your bank account balance and holdings in buildings, land, gold, and stocks will be lost one day. We should recognize that the only wealth that we can truly claim as our own is our faith, contentment, joy, humility, safety, health, and wisdom. Not only do we enjoy the benefits of these types of wealth in this lifetime; we can also share these types of wealth with others in our future lives.

Furthermore, we must place equal importance on the creation and maintenance of personal as well as communal wealth. As a result we will be able to enjoy our personal as well as communal forms of wealth such as sunshine, pure air and clear water. Through this understanding we will be able to appreciate that the mountains and rivers, parks and roads are some of the vast wealth that we have inherited in society and in this universe. How then, can we consider ourselves as poor and materially deficient in any way?

Contrary to the general belief that the purpose of life in this world is to suffer and struggle, we are here to enjoy peace and serenity brought about by our blessings and wisdom. However these benefits are possible only if we apply ourselves to our own development.

(3) To develop harmony, joy, love and respect in the human race.

No single person owns this world. Our world is a place where many people live and work together. There are billions of human beings in this world, and the only hope for so many people to coexist harmoniously is by nurturing benevolent relationships and satisfying the needs of one another. That is why we have the development of grand buildings in cosmopolitan cities, the establishment of international banking systems, marital arrangements, and communal facilities sat-

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isfying our daily needs for clothing, food, accommodation and transportation.

However these developments have also resulted in the creation of dance halls, gambling dens, and rival gangs, which encourage the pursuit of sensory excitement and the pollution of our spiritual nature. These distorted developments of our society have created much contradiction and conflict that has actually emphasized the need for mutual respect and harmony among all beings. It appears that there is a need to reassess the value of respect, love and harmony in human relationships.

In the past, major religions and philosophers advocated universal love, virtue, and morality with the ultimate goal of establishing a way to substantiate a proper relationship between harmony, love, respect and human nature. However, through various observations, it may be seen that this relationship is best achieved through the application of Buddhism, for Buddhism emphasizes the practice of our minds which is the origin of everything that is good, virtuous, and perfect.

Generally when we talk about development of resources in this world, we are only referring to physical development. To be able to transcend spiritual obstacles we will need to develop our inner treasures. In order to purify our minds, the BLIA has been developing a series of activities involving the “ Reclamation of Our Minds” campaign. To encourage harmony within society, the BLIA had promoted in the past the “ Observation of the Seven Admonitions” campaign. Another campaign entitled the “ Love and Compassion Campaign,” was conducted as an attempt to rediscover respect in the human race. Similarly the purpose of “ The Three Benevolent Acts” was to ensure appropriate interaction between individual members of the community.

We have, in successive General Conferences, presented topical themes such as “ Joy and Harmony,” “ Oneness and Coexistence,” “ Respect and Tolerance,” “ Equality and Peace,” “ Wholeness and Freeness,” “ Nature and Life” and “ One Truth for All” for the purpose of promoting a harmonious and respectful society. Similarly, we have stressed the need to “ maintain respect among our members and always be prepared to welcome their arrivals and departures.” We have also emphasized the importance of “ daily practices and being respectful at all times.” These are essential ways of enhancing human

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relationships.

It is also our wish that our members can learn through the Buddha's inspiration and teachings how to explore and develop our inner potentials. We must learn from the Bodhisattva who never slights others who stated that "I must not slight or despise others because every being can become a buddha." We have to fulfil the great vow taken by Samantabhadra Bodhisattva to rejoice in the performance of every meritorious deed. We must follow the persevere spirits exemplified by past saints and sages who prepared to sacrifice their lives for the Dharma. It is hoped that all BLIA members can follow and accomplish this noble objective.

(4) To develop oneness between self and the Buddha.

The world is progressing at an ever-increasing pace and we are all following its progress with great anticipation. Futurology is currently a very popular subject. Everyone is concerned about the future and what it may bring. Young people today are aware of the need for career planning and senior citizens are also actively planning for their financial futures. Similarly no government will be caught without their five-year or ten-year strategic plans, as long term research is being conducted on future world development.

In the past, Buddhism always encouraged its devotees to practice and prepare themselves for their next lives. In other words, these "next lives" are the future. We have scientists nowadays setting up plans to explore and occupy parts of the outer space. As a result there are already schemes available to purchase real estate on the moon and there are migration projects to occupy other planets. We humans are progressively expanding our perspectives on the universe.

Since the beginning of time, humans have always tried to develop their plans to reside in the heavens. In a similar manner, Buddhists are also actively seeking to develop ways in which they can ascend to the Tusita Heaven to be with Maitreya Bodhisattva, or to the Eastern or Western Purelands so that they may live and practice with the Buddhas.

With its many centuries of experience with the "future," and through the integration with science and other cultures, Buddhism is well prepared to deal

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with the development of the future. When Buddhists join their palms or prostrate, they are hoping to connect mentally with the Bodhisattvas and Buddhas. We should now expand this concept of mental connection by seeing ourselves standing side by side with the Bodhisattvas so that one day we can be joined as one.

Whenever we read about the Eastern and Western Purelands and other Buddha realms, we are told of their harmonious existence. We must never consider this fictitious and abstract. We must form a belief that they are realities and should be regarded as a direction for our development.

According to *The Discourse on Buddha-nature*, “Prajna wisdom is essential for the development of Buddhahood. Great compassion is a necessity for the enlightenment of all beings. With these two virtues we shall relinquish all cravings and desires and rekindle merits leading to ultimate perfection. This is why the Buddha says that all beings possess the Buddha-nature.”

The self and the Buddha being one is not a distant and unreachable dream. It is in fact an undeniable truth. We hope that all members of the BLIA can make better use of their time in this world to offer their kindness, compassion and wisdom, and to rediscover their true nature. As long as we are prepared to embrace this truth, we will always be part of the Buddha fraternity. This is how the self and the Buddha being one can be attained.

In conclusion, “To Resolve and To Develop” is our mission to our family, society, country, the universe, and ourselves.

From this day forward, we must put into practice our resolve to be:

- * kind and compassionate
- * non-discriminatory
- * strong and steadfast with our minds and faith
- * supportive of a common fellowship of the human race
- * firm in our Bodhi mind and striving for freedom and perfection.

At the same time we must ensure that social development is not monopolized by materialist objectives. We must try to develop:

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- * truth, goodness and perfection in human nature
- * blessings, wisdom and virtuous wealth in this world
- * harmony, joy, love and respect in the human race
- * oneness of self and the Buddha.

Everyone must resolve to make his or her commitment immediately. At the same time, we must act now to develop our goals for future accomplishments.

(Translated by Ven. Miao Guang)