



*Living Buddha Lian-sheng Sheng-yen Lu*

His Holiness Living Buddha Lian-sheng is the Root Guru of True Buddha School. He is referred to as Grand Master by his disciples, and he is regarded as the emanation of Amitabha Buddha.

As the lineage holder of the Nyingma, Kagyu, Sakya and Gelug schools of Tibetan Buddhism, Living Buddha Lian-sheng has attained the highest fruition in those schools including the Great Perfection, Mahamudra, Lamdre, and Yamantaka Sadhana.

Living Buddha Lian-sheng teaches both exoteric and esoteric Buddhism, and also incorporates elements of Zen and Taoism into his teachings. He emphasizes actual practice and encourages students to integrate his Buddhist teachings into their daily lives. The quintessence of his personal journey, his methods of cultivation and his realization are embodied in the True Buddha Tantra, which is an inspiring, practical, and powerful teaching that is well-suited for people in modern society. Living Buddha Lian-sheng leads a disciplined life which includes spiritual practice, teaching, writing, and painting. He is an excellent model for spiritual cultivators in this degenerated age.

As of today, over five million people have taken refuge in True Buddha School. With over 400 chapters worldwide, True Buddha School is recognized as a major Buddhist group today. Living Buddha Lian-sheng has written over 200 books in Chinese on topics ranging from Vajrayana Buddhism to Feng Shui, Zen Buddhism, and Taoism. Many of these books are now being translated into English and various other languages.



THE  
TRUE BUDDHA  
SCHOOL  
INTRODUCTORY HANDBOOK





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## PART ONE

### Testing Our Faith

#### Importance of Faith

Religious faith provides one with a goal and a form of spiritual reliance. Faith is important because it gives rise to a powerful invisible strength. Through the cultivation of one's speech and actions, one's morality and spirituality are uplifted, and as a result, one will be able to reach the realm of sainthood.

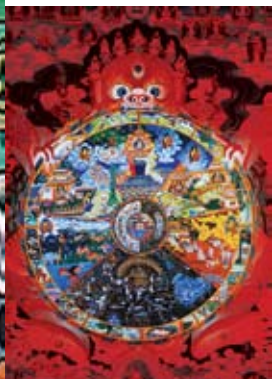
#### Reasons Why We Believe in Buddhism

##### UNDERSTANDING KARMA AND REINCARNATION

Karma is simply cause and effect. Everything in this world is governed by karma due to the fact that cause and effect is ever present and exacting. For instance, there are people with great talents and skills who never have the opportunity to live up to their potential. However, there are also people who are illiterate yet they excel in all endeavors and become leaders in their fields. Karma spans many lifetimes and if we want to understand why certain events happen to us in this lifetime, we must know this: "What we are today is a result of our deeds in our past lives, and our future is determined by our deeds in the present life."

Buddhism is based on the law of karma which moves in cycles of past, present and future. The law states that any good or bad karma that is created today leads to either happiness or suffering in the future. There is a Chinese saying, "Calamities and blessings never pass through a doorway except when they are invited." In other words, "We reap what we sow." To elaborate on this, "Good deeds bring good fruits, and bad deeds bring bad fruits. Karma is not unfair; it's just that the time is not ripe yet."





Due to their actions, sentient beings attract all kinds of karmic consequences. Subsequently, they spend lifetimes dwelling in the six realms of samsara (the heavenly realm, human realm, asura realm, animal realm, hungry ghost realm, and hell realm). This is known as reincarnation. Metaphorically speaking, karma is the axle that drives the wheel of reincarnation and it is the reason why sentient beings are continually imprisoned in the cycle of life and death. The Buddha once said, “Despite hundreds and thousands of kalpas, the karma you create does not disappear. When the circumstances arise, you must bear the consequence of your karmic actions.”

#### PROPER CULTIVATION WILL LEAD YOU OUT OF REINCARNATION

Happiness and suffering are intertwined in our world. We must endure the physical suffering of birth, aging, sickness and death, and the emotional suffering of separation, hatred and unfulfillment. There is also the suffering that arises from the five skandhas (aggregates). These are the eight kinds of suffering in life.

The purposes of cultivation are to remove all past and present karma, to remove hindrances and to receive purification, all through the practice of the correct Dharma. Cultivation ensures that upon death, we can have a smooth journey to the Buddha’s Pure Land without encountering any obstacles along the way.

#### Assurance of a Place after Death:

The true meaning of life is to improve the level of our spiritual awareness in order to transcend the six realms and attain liberation from all of our worries. We must prepare for the inevitability of death. Once our time is up, we can take nothing with us except for our karma. Hence, we must gain control in this lifetime regarding our next place of rebirth. In order to do this, we need to have all the necessary conditions for liberation from samsara.



#### Rising from the Ordinary Realm to Sainthood and Liberating from Samsara:

In Buddhism, the universe is classified into ten realms. They are: buddha, bodhisattva, pratyekabuddha (solitary buddhas), sravaka (sound-hearers or arhats), heaven, human, asura, animal, hungry ghost, and hell. The first four realms are known as the “Four Holy Realms,” while the remaining six realms are known as the “Six Mundane Realms.” The higher that the realm is above the human world, the greater the blessing is in that realm. Likewise, the lower that the realm is below the human realm, the greater the suffering is in that realm. Once we understand the principles of karma and reincarnation, we must eliminate all of the negative karma created from our past lives, and we must purify ourselves and lift ourselves to a higher and purer spiritual realm. Through cultivation, we can free ourselves from suffering, and ultimately liberate ourselves from samsara and the wheel of life and death.

#### Liberation of the Spirit and Gaining Rebirth in the Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss:

The average human lifespan is less than a hundred years, and when we leave this world, everything that means so much to us – our spouse, children, and wealth – are lost in the blink of an eye. Our karmic burden is the only thing that we can take with us. One life after another, we go through this wheel of reincarnation and we act out our different roles, which are bounded by the forces of karma. Yet, these lives return to emptiness in the end.

The purposes of cultivation are therefore to gain self-realization, attain liberation from samsara, and return to the Four Holy Realms. We do not want to remain in the endless cycle





## THE EIGHT MOST DIRECT METHODS OF ELIMINATING KARMIC HINDRANCES

1. Recite the *High King Avalokitesvara Sutra* one thousand times (eliminating hindrances through the power of sutra).
2. Recite the Root Guru Mantra one million times (eliminating hindrances through the power of mantra).
3. Cultivate the Repentance Practice two hundred times (eliminating hindrances through the power of Dharma).
4. Pay homage and make offerings to buddhas and bodhisattvas; sponsor building of temples or stupas; sponsor the creation of the images of buddhas and bodhisattvas; sponsor printing of sutras or virtuous books; and perform good deeds to help fellow sentient beings (eliminating hindrances through the power of giving alms).
5. Recite the buddhas' or bodhisattvas' names until attaining the spiritual response (eliminating hindrances through the power of the Buddha).
6. Acquire strength from following the precepts, improve one's concentration, and gain wisdom through meditation (eliminating hindrances through the power of meditation).
7. Through the cultivation and blessings of the Root Guru, all negative karma is either substituted or diverted (eliminating hindrances through the power of the Root Guru).
8. Transformation through emptiness (eliminating hindrances through the power of the Void).

## Differences Between Traditional Buddhism and Vajrayana Buddhism

### SUTRAYANA BUDDHISM AND VAJRAYANA BUDDHISM

The Sutrayana tradition of Buddhism contains the fundamental teachings of Buddhism, where the teachings are revealed to everyone

of the six realms. By cultivating the correct Dharma, we can be liberated and be reborn in the luminous Buddha Land without being subject to reincarnation again. Therefore, we have the power to transcend the three realms which are the realms of desire, form, and formlessness.

The doctrine of Buddhism is encapsulated in this saying: "Avoid all evil, do only good, and purify the mind."

"Avoid all evil and do only good" is the way that we can benefit many sentient beings. It is not enough to liberate ourselves. We need to perform benevolent deeds and practice compassion by helping others (most religions adhere to this universal doctrine).

"Purify the mind" refers to the purification of our own hearts, so that we may increase the brilliance of wisdom and enter into the Void. In doing so, we will realize the universal truth, and liberate ourselves from all worries and the cycle of reincarnation.

It is only through diligent cultivation that we may eliminate all negative karma, remove all defilements, and bring forth the innate Buddha light within us. We should realize that we are no different from the buddhas because we are the buddhas and bodhisattvas. Upon this realization, we will experience the wisdom of equanimity of the Buddha. Most religions hold the view that no human can ever become a divine being or become God. This is contrary to the Buddhist doctrine, which teaches that all sentient beings have Buddha nature and upon awakening, they become buddhas.

Hence, Buddhism is perfect and all encompassing. This is why we should have faith in Buddhism and take refuge in the Buddha's teachings.



in a clear and comprehensible way. They are taught in accordance to the needs and affinities of sentient beings. Apart from the Vajrayana teachings, all Buddhist teachings of the Four Noble Truths, the Twelve Links of Dependent Origination, the Six Paramitas, and thousands of others as taught in the Tripitaka (the Buddhist Canon), are part of the Sutrayana tradition.

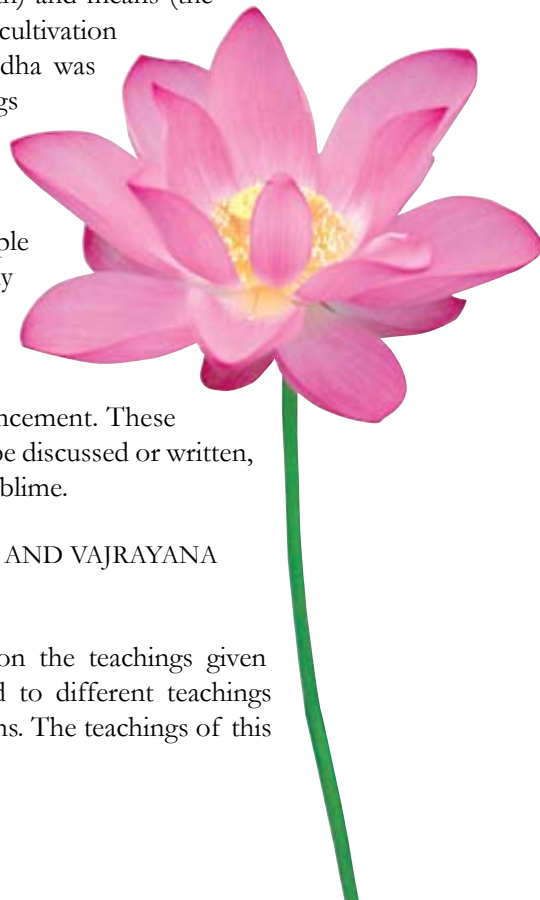
Vajrayana Buddhism includes the teachings revealed in the Diamond and Womb Mandalas, which were transmitted by Vairocana Tathagata. Vajrayana is the essence of the inner realization of the buddhas. This inner realization was authenticated by the dharma body of the buddhas. Vajrayana is also known as an esoteric teaching because those who have not received the proper initiation or empowerment cannot practice it. It is the perfect union of insight (ultimate truth) and means (the ways of validating ultimate truth through the cultivation of the three secrets). When Shakyamuni Buddha was propagating the Dharma, some of the teachings were concealed. The teachings that were concealed were those of the Vajrayana. The inner realization of all buddhas is a profound secret beyond the understanding of most people and even the bodhisattvas may not necessarily comprehend it.

Vajrayana Buddhism relies more on actual practice, and relies on both the guru and the Dharma teachings for spiritual advancement. These teachings are esoteric, not because they cannot be discussed or written, but because they are supremely precious and sublime.

#### DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE SUTRAYANA AND VAJRAYANA TRADITIONS

##### **Difference in Approach:**

Sutrayana tradition – this tradition relies on the teachings given by Shakyamuni Buddha. The practices accord to different teachings which all have varying degrees of spiritual depths. The teachings of this



tradition are widely available.

Vajrayana tradition – this tradition relies on the teachings given by Vairocana Tathagata. It teaches the Dharma of attaining buddhahood in one lifetime. The use of mantras is a distinguishing characteristic of this tradition, and the teachings have been transmitted in secrecy through the ages.

##### **Difference in the Teachings:**

The four major schools of the Sutrayana traditions are as follows:

1. Tiantai or Tendai School – the name of this school is derived from Mount Tiantai, and its teachings are based on the *Lotus Sutra*. The school also teaches the “Great Cessation and Contemplation” practice.
2. Huayan or Avatamsaka School – this school teaches the principle that there are no obstructions between individual phenomena in the Ultimate State of Emptiness, and its teachings are based on the *Avatamsaka Sutra* (also known as the *Flower Garland Sutra* or the *Flower Adornment Sutra*).
3. Zen School – this school teaches the Treasury of the True Dharma Eye and teaches about the wondrous mind of nirvana. It provides a separate transmission from the teachings contained in the Buddhist sutras and scriptures, and it aims at attaining enlightenment through contemplation.
4. Pure Land School – this school’s teachings are based on three scriptures and one treatise, which are: the *Sutra of the Buddha of Infinite Life*, the *Sutra on the Meditation on the Buddha of Infinite Life*, the *Amitabha Sutra* and the *Rebirth Treatise*. This school propagates the idea of gaining rebirth in the Western Paradise of Ultimate Bliss, which is the Pure Land of Amitabha Buddha.

The teachings of the Vajrayana tradition are based on diligent cultivation, which integrates the three secrets of the body, speech, and mind as one. Through cultivation, the practitioners are able to reach the other shore of buddhahood. The main sutras of the school are the *Mahavairocana Sutra* and the *Vajrasekhara Sutra*.



### **Difference in the Approach to Taking Refuge:**

Sutrayana tradition – this tradition practices the Threefold Refuge (taking refuge in the Triple Jewels of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha).

Vajrayana tradition – this tradition practices the Fourfold Refuge (taking refuge in the Root Guru, Buddha, Dharma and Sangha).

In the Vajrayana tradition, if one does not take refuge in a Root Guru and does not receive initiation from him, one cannot do the Vajrayana practices. Without the power and blessings from the root lineage, one's practices will be fruitless, and no beneficial results will be generated from the mantras that are chanted or the practices that are performed. To practice without receiving the necessary empowerments is considered a form of dharma stealing and it is a violation of the Samaya Precepts.

### **Difference in the Approach to Cultivation:**

Sutrayana tradition – in this tradition, cultivation is largely based on chanting which includes the recitation of the Buddha's name, repentance practice, sutra chanting, circumambulating the Buddha, and preaching. In addition, meditation is practiced by some.

Vajrayana tradition – in this tradition, cultivation is focused on the actual practice of Tantric Dharma. Basically, the tradition views all sutras and treatises as a compass for attaining buddhahood. When actual practice is combined with the chanting of sutras and treatises, they complement each other. The practice of Tantric Dharma and rituals leads from the Generation Stage to the Completion Stage. The resulting goal of this path is to attain buddhahood in this lifetime.

### **Difference in the Approach to Gaining Rebirth:**

Sutrayana tradition – this tradition relies mainly on the outer power generated by the buddhas and bodhisattvas to be reborn in the Buddha Land, and minimal inner power is generated.

Vajrayana tradition – this tradition relies mainly on the inner power. However, outer power is still sought from the buddhas and bodhisattvas. With the combination of both powers, the attainment of buddhahood can be achieved in this lifetime.



### **Difference in the Completion of Merits:**

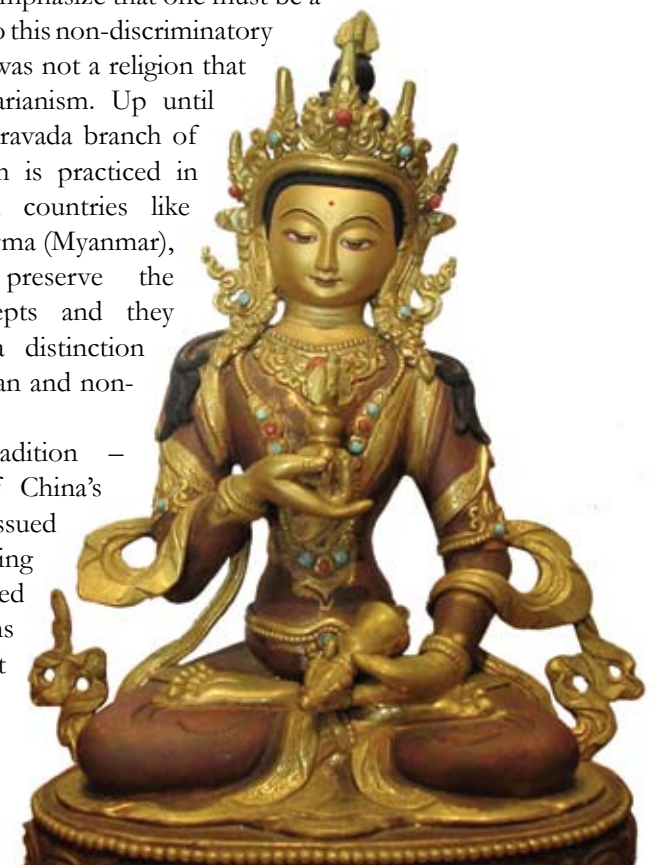
Sutrayana tradition – three great kalpas are required to attain buddhahood.

Vajrayana tradition – one is able to swiftly attain the perfect wondrous enlightenment. As one practices with firm faith and gains spiritual responses by the three secrets of the body, speech and mind, one can attain buddhahood in this lifetime.

### **Difference in Dietary Requirement:**

During the time of Shakyamuni Buddha, there was a rule that forbade the ordained monks and nuns to cook. The monks and nuns had to ask for alms, and they ate whatever food that was given to them without making a distinction between vegetarian or non-vegetarian. Shakyamuni Buddha did not emphasize that one must be a vegetarian. Due to this non-discriminatory view, Buddhism was not a religion that advocated vegetarianism. Up until this day, the Theravada branch of Buddhism, which is practiced in Southeast Asian countries like Thailand and Burma (Myanmar), continues to preserve the traditional precepts and they do not make a distinction between vegetarian and non-vegetarian.

Sutrayana tradition – Emperor Wu of China's Liang Dynasty issued a decree dictating that all ordained monks and nuns must adopt







vegetarianism. From then until now, the Sutrayana tradition has still been influenced by this decree.

Vajrayana tradition – this branch of Buddhism continued to advocate the precepts laid down by the Buddha. Its view of the intake of food is flexible and based on affinity and circumstances. However, there are two things that must be noted prior to eating:

1. Before consuming any item of meat, a deliverance ritual involving mantra and visualization is performed to deliver the spirits that are attached to the meat for rebirth. After this step of deliverance, the food is then offered to the buddhas, bodhisattvas and dharma protectors. Hence, deliverance and offering are very important.

2. The principles of True Buddha School regarding the consumption of meat are:

- One must not kill (killing violates a precept).
- Only three kinds of clean meats may be consumed. Meat can only be consumed in the following circumstances: the practitioners did not witness the slaughtering, did not hear the cry of the animal being slaughtered, and the animal was not slaughtered due to the direct will of the practitioners. These exceptions exist as a form of cultivating compassion.
- The deliverance ritual must be performed prior to consuming the meat by reciting the Manjusri Deliverance Mantra and by forming the Great Ocean Deliverance Mudra.
- One must offer the food (visualize the offerings multiplying endlessly, and making the offerings to the Root Guru, buddhas, bodhisattvas, dharma protectors, dakas, dakinis, heavenly beings, as well as sentient beings of the six realms).

The True Buddha Tantra is unique because it includes this ability to deliver spirits that are attached to the meat, to a better rebirth. By this method, animal spirits gain an affinity with the buddhas because they are touched and blessed by the spiritual light of the buddhas. This point is of vital importance.

Other differences between the Sutrayana and Vajrayana traditions include their depictions of the buddhas' statues and the arrangement of altars, for example.



## Significance of Taking Refuge

Taking refuge means to accept guidance, reliance and deliverance.

The heart of taking refuge lies in one word: faith. Faith is the beginning of all endeavors, just as the saying goes:

*Faith is the basis of the path, the mother of virtues;  
Nourishing and growing all good ways,  
Cutting away the net of doubts,  
Revealing the unsurpassed road to enlightenment.*

The doctrine of faith, understanding, practice, and realization as taught in Buddhism begins with faith.

Taking refuge and receiving the respective empowerments are similar to a student officially registering for enrollment in school. When one receives the empowerment from Living Buddha Lian-sheng and takes refuge in him, one also receives the lineage transmission of True Buddha School and formally becomes a disciple of the school. One's negative karma gradually dissolves, and one is protected by the thirty-six benevolent deities. One also receives all kinds of merits, and does not easily fall into the Three Evil Paths. Therefore, one is able to swiftly accumulate good karma, and eventually realize supreme enlightenment.

From the discussion above, one can thus see that the ritual of taking refuge and empowerment is a holy and noble undertaking. Once one receives the refuge empowerment, one truly enters the gate of practicing Buddhism and becomes a True Buddha disciple.

However, taking refuge is not the same as ordination (becoming a monk or nun). Any ordination must have the written and signed consent from one's parents or spouse, and it must be officially approved by the highest authority of True Buddha School.

The Sutrayana tradition practices the Threefold Refuge, whereas the Vajrayana tradition practices the Fourfold Refuge.

In the Fourfold Refuge, the meaning of the Sanskrit word "Namo" is to take refuge.



Namo Guru bei – I take refuge in the Root Guru.  
 Namu Buddha ye – I take refuge in the Buddha.  
 Namu Dharma ye – I take refuge in the Dharma.  
 Namu Sangha ye – I take refuge in the Sangha or the ordained.

## Significance of Taking Refuge in Living Buddha Lian-sheng and True Buddha School

### THE MERITS OF TAKING REFUGE

Living Buddha Lian-sheng has the dharma title of “Great Blessing Vajra” and he is the Root Guru of True Buddha School. True Buddha disciples who cultivate the Root Guru Practice will be able to achieve spiritual union and responses from the Root Guru, which is a great blessing. With the Root Guru’s blessing, one can gain health, long life, a harmonious family, fortune, wisdom, and the fulfillment of all wishes in the mundane realm. In the transcendental realm, one attains bodhisattvahood.

According to the Sutra of Consecration, students are protected by thirty-six guardians after taking refuge, which are sent by the Four Heavenly Kings (devarajas). If these students can also cultivate the Root Guru Practice, then Vajrayaksa, his retinue of five hundred, and multitudes of bodhisattvas will also provide protection.

All students who take refuge and receive the necessary empowerments shall, through the diligent cultivation of the Root Guru Practice, benefit both themselves and others due to the boundless merits of the Root Guru Practice. All transgressions will be extinguished and all evil shall depart. The Root Guru Practice is the most efficacious of all practices and should be widely propagated.

### THE METHODS OF TAKING REFUGE

#### **In Writing:**

At 7:00 a.m. (your local time), on either the first or the fifteenth of every lunar month, face the direction of the rising sun. With palms joined,





reverently recite the Fourfold Refuge Mantra three times: “Namo Guru bei, Namo Buddha ye, Namo Dharma ye, Namo Sangha ye. Seeking Living Buddha Lian-sheng’s guidance, I am taking refuge in the True Buddha,” and prostrate three times.

Send a letter to the True Buddha Foundation to indicate your wish to receive the refuge empowerment. State your name, address, age, and enclose a voluntary offering to the contact address of Living Buddha Lian-sheng. Upon receiving the letter, the True Buddha Foundation will process your request. The address is:

Grand Master Sheng-yen Lu  
17102 NE 40th Ct.  
Redmond, WA 98052, USA  
Tel: 425-885-7573  
Fax: 425-883-2173

Upon receiving the refuge request letter, the True Buddha Foundation will send you a refuge certificate, a picture of Living Buddha Lian-sheng, and instructions on how to start cultivation of the Four Preliminary Practices.

**In Person:**

You may obtain refuge empowerment personally from Grand Master Lu, or from a True Buddha acharya who confers the empowerment on behalf of Grand Master, by visiting a True Buddha temple, chapter, cultivation group, or by attending a True Buddha ceremony.

**PROBLEM WITH RECEIVING OTHER REFUGE EMPOWERMENTS**

Those who have taken refuge in True Buddha School have received the lineage transmission, so it is best not to accept other refuge empowerments. Otherwise, the lineage transmission will be distorted and students will lose the power of transmission from True Buddha School.

**Why Empowerments are Necessary**

**MERITS OF EMPOWERMENTS**

In the Vajrayana tradition of Buddhism, there are great merits in receiving empowerments. These empowerments transform an ordinary and mundane person into a child of the Buddha. After receiving an empowerment, the body, speech and mind of the person are equivalent to the Buddha. Though one has not attained buddhahood, one has received the seed of buddhahood in principle, and is regarded as a Buddha in waiting.

Empowerments are a phenomenon wherein the cosmic consciousness, the Root Guru and the disciple who receives the empowerments, have merged into one. Empowerments carry these three significances:

1. Purification: Removal of all past negative karma.
2. Blessing: The power of the Root Guru enters the disciple’s body.
3. Conferring the prediction of buddhahood: The most important significance is “the conferring of the Buddha’s consciousness and Buddha seed in the body of the disciple.”

There are four types of empowerments in Vajrayana, namely the outer empowerments, the inner empowerments, the secret empowerments and the most secret empowerments.



## BASIC KNOWLEDGE OF EMPOWERMENT

All practices in Vajrayana Buddhism require empowerments.

Empowerments are needed in order to identify and understand one's lineage. If the practitioners receive empowerments outside of True Buddha School, they naturally lose the lineage from True Buddha School.

There are various levels of empowerment, and a higher level empowerment should not be taken prior to receiving the lower level empowerment that precedes it. The rules as laid down by the lineage gurus dictate that the practitioners begin with the Generation Stage and progress onto the Completion Stage. Once the practitioners obtain confirmation of a spiritual response, they are allowed to receive the higher empowerments.

When the practitioners receive a direct empowerment from the Root Guru, they cannot accept the same empowerment from a True Buddha School acharya. This would be an inversion of lineage transmission and it is forbidden.

Empowerments that are higher than the inner empowerments (except for the Treasure Vase Breathing Practice Empowerment) must be directly transmitted by the Root Guru, and cannot be transmitted via remote empowerments.

An acharya, who has not received a certain empowerment from the Root Guru, cannot confer that empowerment, since he or she has not received it.

When the practitioners are receiving the Personal Deity Practice Empowerment, they must focus on the respective deity as they form the mudra, recite the mantra and perform the visualization, aligning their body, speech and mind with the respective deity.

## Importance of Lineage Transmission

The lineage transmission represents a dharma stream which flows and originates from the Root Guru's blessings and empowerments. Vajrayana



Buddhism places great importance on lineage transmission, and regards the act of respecting one's Root Guru as the most important. This is because, without the blessings and empowerments from the Root Guru, one cannot receive the Vajrayana teachings and cultivate the teachings.

The Root Guru is the embodiment of the Triple Jewels of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. He is the origin of all blessings and empowerments because all future accomplishments in one's cultivation of Buddhism originate from the Root Guru. Also, the Root Guru is a cultivator with genuine realization. The blessings and empowerments bestowed by him are the same as those bestowed by the Buddha.

## Meaning of "Living Buddha"

The word "*tulku*" in Tibetan is translated in Chinese as "Living Buddha." It refers to enlightened cultivators who have chosen to return to the world. Enlightened cultivators are beings who have "realized the mind, seen the Buddha nature and attained self-mastery over life and death." In principle, tulkus are incarnations of the buddhas, bodhisattvas, arhats, or sravakas who have returned to the world to deliver sentient beings. However, once they are incarnated as human beings, they have to start the process of cultivation all over again. Tulkus who have undergone rigorous training and have once again achieved the state of "realizing the mind, seeing the Buddha nature and attaining self-mastery over life and death" are considered to be genuine Living Buddhas.

Living Buddha Lian-sheng is a tulku because he is the incarnation of White Mahapadmakumara. Moreover, he has received the essence of Vajrayana from Padmasambhava in a series of pure visions. His profound realization in Vajrayana Buddhism have led many Tibetan rinpoches to seek refuge in him. Therefore, he is regarded as the Great Tulku among tulkus.



## Why the Founder of True Buddha School is Known as Living Buddha Lian-sheng

### LIVING BUDDHA LIAN-SHENG IS THE TEACHER OF MANY TULKUS AND SENIOR MASTERS

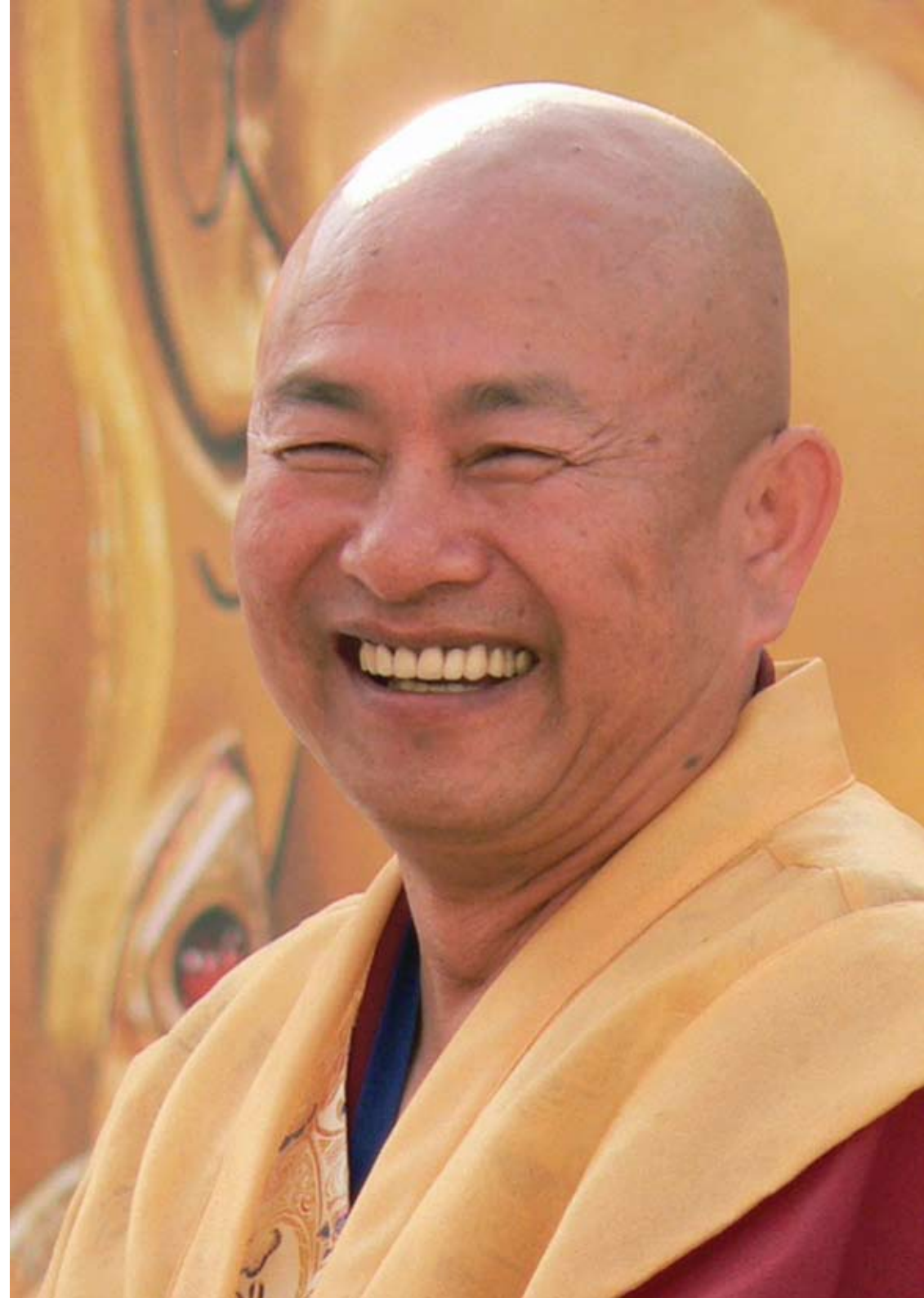
Tibetan rinpoches and exoteric Buddhist masters such as Reverend Daxiong, Huisong of Fo Guang Shan (Buddha Light Mountain), Yuanheng Temple's Reverend Shi Huida, and Reverend Shi Jiguang have taken refuge in Living Buddha Lian-sheng.

### FIVE MILLION STUDENTS AROUND THE WORLD ADDRESS THEIR ROOT GURU, HIS HOLINESS LIAN-SHENG, AS LIVING BUDDHA

Living Buddha Lian-sheng's dharma power is boundless, and many of his students have received help through his supernatural power. There are cases where the terminally ill or the incurable, receive the spiritual power from Living Buddha Lian-sheng and recover completely. The compassion and vows of Living Buddha Lian-sheng extend to a great field of sentient beings, and countless stories of students worldwide whose lives have been touched and saved are simply overwhelming.

The late Kalu Rinpoche once said, "Among those who propagate the Vajrayana teachings in Chinese, Living Buddha Lian-sheng is indeed the highest accomplished cultivator. It is important that people should 'Honor the Guru, Treasure the Dharma and Practice diligently.' The Vajrayana Dharma as taught by Living Buddha Lian-sheng helps practitioners to have great attainments. I (Kalu Rinpoche) hold the picture of Living Buddha Lian-sheng in my hands as a token of respect, and it is the same respect that I give to the Buddha."

A Tibetan throne holder and tulku once said: "I see the mark of Mahasri (Goddess Laksmi) imprinted on the body of Living Buddha Lian-sheng, and I also see the mark of Shakyamuni Buddha on his crown. If a tulku has the mark of Mahasri, it is deemed sufficient, let alone having the mark of Shakyamuni Buddha. Any acharya with the mark of Shakyamuni Buddha symbolizes his status as a throne holder,





and Living Buddha Lian-sheng is certainly a throne holder.”

Living Buddha Lian-sheng is indeed a vajra acharya, the living proof of a manifested True Buddha. Here is a list of signs of a vajra acharya:

1. A Buddha-like countenance.
2. Attainment of the Rainbow Body.
3. An opening at the crown.
4. Revealing his lunar birth date (the four pillars or Bazi).
5. Accomplishment of Bardo Deliverance.
6. Bestows blessings and being able to carry the karma of others.
7. Attainment of great wisdom.
8. Has access to terma, which are the esoteric teachings hidden in the elements.
9. Establishment of pure lands of the bliss body and emanation body.
10. Being unaffected by the Eight Winds.

LIVING BUDDHA LIAN-SHENG IS A VAJRA ACHARYA OF TEN VIRTUES, WHOSE ATTAINMENTS IN THIS LIFETIME ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. Understands the teachings of the Sutrayana and Vajrayana traditions.
2. Endowed with the three wisdoms.
3. Attains great supernatural powers.
4. Relentless perseverance.
5. Transmissions of the Vajrayana teachings are given in their proper stages.
6. All is done for the sake of sentient beings.
7. Acts in accordance with the Buddhadharma.
8. Well-versed in all sutras and treatises.
9. Supreme wisdom.
10. Illumination from within and gained realization through actual practice.



THE GREAT VOWS OF LIVING BUDDHA LIAN-SHENG

I (Living Buddha Lian-sheng), due to compassion for sentient beings, hereby vow to remain in the Saha world throughout all lifetimes until the last sentient being attains buddhahood.

I vow to enter hell to deliver all sentient beings in spite of suffering excruciating pain and agony. Like the vow of Ksitigarbha, I shall not enter nirvana until the hell is empty. I shall not forsake a single sentient being.

### Lifetime Accomplishments of Living Buddha Lian-sheng

Living Buddha Lian-sheng, whose real identity is the White Mahapadmakumara, was born in the human world where he attained buddhahood through his cultivation. He was conferred the name “Lotus Light Unhindered Buddha” by Shakyamuni Buddha in the spiritual world.

### Why Disciples Worship the Images of Living Buddha Lian-sheng

The principal deity on the shrines of True Buddha School disciples is the White Mahapadmakumara, the spiritual identity of Living Buddha Lian-sheng. This is placed in the central position to highlight the importance of the lineage, because there are no accomplishments without the blessing from the lineage.

If a person has not yet attained buddhahood and the person’s photo is enshrined for worship, then his life will be shortened and he will pass



away very soon. More than five million disciples of True Buddha School, including laity, monks and nuns, tulkus and rinpoches, have continued to enshrine and worship the photo of Living Buddha Lian-sheng, and some have done this for over twenty years. Yet, Living Buddha Lian-sheng remains healthy and alive. This is proof that Living Buddha Lian-sheng is complete with the ten virtues and is the manifestation of a True Buddha.

### Importance of Cultivating the True Buddha Tantra

We cultivate in pursuit of the eternal truth to seek wisdom and blessings. There is too much suffering in the human life and impermanence is everywhere. Regardless of what one achieves or does not achieve, everything becomes emptiness in the end. Once one recognizes this truth, one will understand the importance of cultivation.

#### THE TRUE BUDDHA TANTRA IS SUITABLE FOR MODERN PEOPLE

The True Buddha Tantra adheres to the Buddhist teachings of right faith and right thought, and conforms to the times. Its characteristics are as follows:

The True Buddha Tantra, as transmitted in True Buddha School, is tailored for the masses and it is widely available and practical. It is suitable for practice at home.

The True Buddha Tantra integrates the teachings of Taoism, Sutrayana Buddhism and Vajrayana Buddhism. Living Buddha Lian-sheng reveals the secret mantras and pith instructions to the world. His teachings are infused with precepts and principles expounded in the Sutrayana traditions. They also incorporate Taoist methods for helping the mundane world, which are presented in a Vajrayana orientation. Hence, it is truly suited for people of all religious beliefs.

Due to his compassion and equanimity, the founder of True Buddha School Living Buddha Lian-sheng, advocates that no one should

Left: Grand Master Lu conducting a homa.



be discriminated against in regards to offerings, regardless of social status or the amount of money they donate. Thus, participants in all True Buddha ceremonies and activities may donate whatever amount they wish.

It is an individual's decision and choice to adopt a vegetarian or non-vegetarian diet, regardless of whether the individual is a lay person, monk or nun. However, one must perform the Bardo Deliverance and offering ritual prior to partaking any meals.

The True Buddha Tantra offers the swiftest way to eradicate negative karma and its teachings are tailored to fit the pace of a modern lifestyle.

The True Buddha Tantra is the essence of teachings based on the many years of cultivation of Living Buddha Lian-sheng as he made his journey from an ordinary person to buddhahood. By simplifying many of the traditional rituals that were redundant, Living Buddha Lian-sheng condensed the teachings into a series of simple, concise, and yet effective practices specifically tailored to meet the pace of a modern society. By cultivating daily, practitioners undergo a gradual and subtle transformation, and spiritual responses arrive swiftly. This is one of the extraordinary qualities of the True Buddha Tantra.



#### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EMERGENCE OF TRUE BUDDHA SCHOOL IN THIS AGE OF DEGENERATION

1. The worldly aspect of the True Buddha Tantra helps to fulfill one's wishes of good health, longevity, love and respect in the family, good fortune, and wisdom, among other kinds of blessings in the mundane realm.
2. The spiritual aspect of the True Buddha Tantra helps one to eliminate worries and transcend life and death, reaching the state



- of the all-encompassing wisdom of true and perfect realization and achieving the fruition of buddhahood.
3. The spirit of True Buddha School is to guide one towards the good, and illuminate the hearts of sentient beings with truth and goodness. Through cultivation, one proceeds on the illuminating path towards buddhahood.
  4. True Buddha School is perfect and it offers the most unique path among all schools of Buddhism. It helps to avert damage and threats caused by wars.
  5. True Buddha School is a school that truly actualizes the practices of the Buddhadharmā, and it is the greatest gift for sentient beings in this lifetime and the next.
  6. True Buddha School is equipped with the best approach to deliver sentient beings.
  7. True Buddha School is protected and guarded by nagas, heavenly beings, and praised by all buddhas. It is indeed the greatest blessing given to the human world.
  8. True Buddha School liberates people from their suffering.

#### BUDDHAHOOD CAN BE ATTAINED BY PRACTICING THE TRUE BUDDHA TANTRA

Living Buddha Lian-sheng attained realization of buddhahood by practicing the True Buddha Tantra. Should one follow the same path, one will also realize and attain buddhahood. However, Living Buddha Lian-sheng never claims that the True Buddha Tantra is exclusively unique. In fact, the truth that Living Buddha Lian-sheng has realized is the very truth realized by Shakyamuni Buddha.

The doctrine of True Buddha School is all-encompassing, where teachings of Taoism, Sutrayana Buddhism and Vajrayana Buddhism are respected. The True Buddha School's doctrines fit the fabric of truth itself, which is combined with the ancient teachings to serve the greater good.







## PART TWO

### An Introduction to True Buddha School

#### Founder of True Buddha School: Living Buddha Lian-sheng

His Holiness Living Buddha Lian-sheng (birth name Sheng-yen Lu) was born in a chicken barn by the Niuchou River at Chiayi's Houhu District in Taiwan on May 18, 1945 on the Chinese Lunar Calendar. Having graduated with a Bachelor's Degree from the Land Survey Department of Chung Cheng Institute of Technology (as a member of its 28th class), he served in the army for ten years. During this time, he won several literary awards including the Golden Camel Award, Silver Camel Award, and Armed Forces Golden Statue Award for Literature and Arts, to name a few. As a young writer actively involved in the literary community, his early works consisted mainly of prose, poetry, and commentaries.

In 1969, at his mother's request, Living Buddha Lian-sheng accompanied her on a visit to Taichung's Jade Emperor Temple. On that day, Celestially Venerated Golden Mother of the Jade Pond opened his third eye and bestowed him with the ability of spiritual hearing.

In a sacred vision, Living Buddha Lian-sheng saw three Bodhisattvas appear before him. The Bodhisattva in the middle instructed him to "emulate the



Above: Grand Master Lu as a child with his mom.





Buddha wholeheartedly.” Then, the other two Bodhisattvas instructed him to “learn the Dharma wholeheartedly” and “practice morality wholeheartedly.” After giving him these instructions, they vanished. Next, a red banner with two glittering golden Chinese characters “Loyalty” and “Righteousness” appeared. A voice from heaven urged him to follow these two key words as his guiding principles to propagate the Buddhadharma for the benefit of sentient beings and ferry them to the shore of liberation.

That night, the buddhas and bodhisattvas brought Living Buddha Lian-sheng’s soul to the Western Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss (Sukhavati). There, he saw with his own eyes that his dharma body was the Holy Revered One Robed in White, the White Mahapadmakumara of the Eighteen Mahapadmakumaras residing in the Maha Twin Lotus Ponds of the Western Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss. He was born in the human world for the sake of delivering sentient beings to the Maha Twin Lotus Ponds.

Since then, every night for a period of three years, the Eminent Sanshan-Jiuhou transmitted the Vajrayana teachings to Living Buddha Lian-sheng. In 1972, the Eminent Sanshan-Jiuhou instructed him to take refuge in Reverend Liaoming (also known as Taoist Master Qingzhen) who was residing on Jiji Mountain in Nantou County. Reverend Liaoming was a Vajrayana master and was also the Fourteenth Generation Disciple of the Qingcheng Taoist School. He transmitted Taoist practices to Living Buddha Lian-sheng which included: internal alchemy, talismans, Nine Star System of Geomancy (Feng Shui), Chinese Vajrayana practices,



Grand Master Lu in his youth



Sheng-yen Lu, poet and writer

Tibetan Vajrayana practices from the Nyingma School, and the five vidyas (sciences). Later on, Living Buddha Lian-sheng became the Fifteenth Generation Disciple of the Qingcheng Taoist School and his Taoist title is Taoist Master Xuanhe.

By 1972, Living Buddha Lian-sheng has undergone the complete range of Vajrayana cultivations, and he possesses the pith instructions and the experiential insight to the secretly transmitted highest yoga tantras. Due to the results of his training, he became the Secret Master (for details, see Book 129, *Entering the*

*Most Mysterious Spiritual Realm*) and achieved the fruition of the Lotus Light Unhindered Buddha (the same level of a tenth level Bodhisattva - for details, see Book 157, *Spiritual Roaming*).

Starting in 1970, Living Buddha Lian-sheng took refuge in exoteric Buddhist teachers, Reverends Yinshun, Leguo, and Daoan. His liturgy teachers for sutra recitation were Reverends Shanglin and Shanci. In 1972, Living Buddha Lian-sheng received the Bodhisattva Precepts at Nantou’s Bishanyan Temple. His preceptors were Reverends Xiandun, Huisan, and Jueguang.

Having previously received the Chinese and Nyingma Vajrayana teachings from Reverend Liaoming, Living Buddha Lian-sheng received additional lineage transmissions beginning in 1981, due to the ripening of affinity. He received transmissions from all of the four major Tibetan Vajrayana traditions.

Living Buddha Lian-sheng received the heart transmission of Nyingma and the Chinese Vajrayana practices from Reverend Liaoming.



Grand Master Lu with his guru, Thubten Dargye

The lineage emblems that Reverend Liaoming gave to him were a small vajra bell used by Nora Rinpoche, the chest of Manjushri from the Potala Palace, and many tantra manuals.

His Eminence Sakya Zhengkong Rinpoche transmitted the Sakya School's highest teaching Lamdre (The Fruit and its Path) and gave the Acharya Empowerment to Living Buddha Lian-sheng. The lineage emblems that His Eminence Sakya Zhengkong Rinpoche gave to him were his personal items such as a Shakyamuni statue, a Himalayan Lion seal made of jade, a lotus, a jade vase, and a vajra lock.

His Holiness the 16th Gyalwa Karmapa of the Kagyu School bestowed the highest empowerment of the Five-Buddha Dignified Crown Empowerment on Living Buddha Lian-sheng. The lineage emblems that the 16th Gyalwa Karmapa gave to him included a string of white crystal mala beads used by the Karmapa himself, a treasure vase from Rumtek Monastery in Sikkim, and other precious objects.

Vajra Acharya Thubten Dargye of the Gelug School gave the Highest Yoga Tantra Empowerment to Living Buddha Lian-sheng. The lineage

emblems that were given to him belonged to the Seventeenth Kanjurwa Khutughtu, which included two clay statues of Vajrapani and Vajravarahi, and a golden Kalachakra statue. Other emblems that were given to him included Vajra Acharya Thubten Dargye's diamond dharma wheel, a golden vajra bell and scepter, a three faced single-pronged vajra, a lion dharma king robe, and a golden chain of one hundred and eight linked vajra scepters, among other items.

Living Buddha Lian-sheng and his family immigrated to Seattle, USA on June 16, 1982. There, he entered a period of intense cultivation of the Highest Yoga Tantras. In December of that year, Shakyamuni Buddha appeared before him while he was in the meditative state of Vajra Samadhi. Shakyamuni Buddha touched his head with one hand and as he was about to place a Buddha statue above the head of Living Buddha Lian-sheng with the other hand, there was a loud boom. At that moment, a hand suddenly came out of Living Buddha Lian-sheng's head to accept the Buddha statue bestowed by Shakyamuni Buddha, signifying that Living Buddha Lian-sheng had realized the tenth level of bodhisattvahood.

On August 27, 1982 (July 10th on the Chinese lunar calendar), Tibetan Vajrayana founder Padmasambhava manifested his dharma body to Living Buddha Lian-sheng. Afterwards, Padmasambhava transmitted the highest teaching of Vajrayana, the Great Perfection (all eighteen volumes), to Living Buddha Lian-sheng everyday during his meditation for a year. Padmasambhava also conferred the Great Vajra Acharya Empowerment and the title of the Holy Red-crowned Vajra Master Venerable Lian-sheng on him. Later, Living Buddha Lian-sheng received the empowerments and blessings from the three Buddhas on Mount Rainier in Washington.

Living Buddha Lian-sheng cultivated for three years in retreat at his home, located in



Guru Rinpoche, Padmasambhava.



Seattle's Ballard District. During that time, he cultivated the following practices in depth:

1. The Guhyagarbha Tantra.
2. The Guhyasamaja Tantra.
3. The Cakrasamvara Tantra.
4. The Yamantaka Tantra.
5. The Most Esoteric Sadhanga Yoga Fire of Kalachakra.
6. The Most Esoteric Vajra Garlanded Buddha Crown Yoga Practice.
7. The Peaceful and Wrathful Personal Deities Interchange Transformation Practice.
8. The Earth, Water, Fire, Wind, and Emptiness Tantra of the Great Perfection.
9. The Six Yogas of Naropa:
  - a. Inner Fire Yoga (Tummo).
  - b. Illusory Body (Gyulu).
  - c. Dream Yoga (Milam).
  - d. Clear Light (Osel).
  - e. Consciousness Transference (Phowa).
  - f. Bardo.

Moreover, Living Buddha Lian-sheng completed his in-depth practice and study of the experiential insights and pith instructions of the Four Classes of Tantra (Action Tantra, Performance Tantra, Yoga Tantra, and Highest Yoga Tantra). By merging into the Ocean of Vairocana (the all-encompassing ocean of Dharma Nature), he genuinely accomplished the Eight Outer Practices and the Eight Inner Practices.

The epithet of Living Buddha Lian-sheng that is recognized by all buddhas is:

*The Western True Buddha Assembly, Maha Twin Lotus Ponds, the Eighteen Mahapadmakumaras, the Holy Revered One Robed in White, the Holy Red-crowned Vajra Master, the Secret Master of the Realm of Vajra-mantra, the Great Enlightened Founder of Ling Xian True Buddha School, and the Illustrious Tantrika Sheng-yen Lu.*



During the three-year period of cultivating in retreat, a multitude of lineage gurus from various schools of Tibetan Buddhism, appeared in their dharma bodies and transmitted the teachings of “profound inner meaning” and “heart essences” of the Great Perfection to Living Buddha Lian-sheng. Innumerable buddhas and bodhisattvas also manifested their dharma bodies and bestowed great blessings upon Living Buddha Lian-sheng in the following occurrences:

1. Shakyamuni Buddha touched Living Buddha Lian-sheng's head and conferred the prediction of Buddhahood on him.
2. Amitabha Buddha personally entrusted Living Buddha Lian-sheng with the responsibility to deliver sentient beings.
3. Maitreya Bodhisattva bestowed on him the Red Crown.
4. Padmasambhava personally transmitted the Vajrayana teachings to him.

Living Buddha Lian-sheng has incarnated to this world due to a great affinity. He began his cultivation as an ordinary human being and practiced step-by-step by following the proper stages. As a result, he has validated the Buddhadharma through diligent cultivation, and has empirically validated the achievement of attaining Buddhahood in this lifetime.

Furthermore, he has made a very compassionate vow to save the world:

*I (Living Buddha Lian-sheng), due to the compassion for sentient beings, hereby vow to remain in the Saha world throughout all lifetimes until the last sentient being attains Buddhahood.*

*I vow to enter hell to deliver all sentient beings in spite of suffering excruciating pain and agony. I shall not enter nirvana until the hell is empty. I shall not forsake a single sentient being.*

In 1975, Living Buddha Lian-sheng established Ling Xian Zong in Taiwan. He officially changed its name to True Buddha School on March 1, 1983.

On June 28 of the same year (coinciding with his lunar birthday of May 18th on the Chinese lunar calendar), Living Buddha Lian-sheng achieved the Rainbow Body Accomplishment. At that time, millions of



dakinis assembled to praise his accomplishment. The Rainbow Body Accomplishment is the Supreme Perfect Enlightenment (attaining Buddhahood in this lifetime).

In 1985, he established the main True Buddha School temple, the Ling Shen Ching Tze Temple in Seattle, which was dedicated to the propagation of the True Buddha Tantra.

On May 6, 1992, Shakyamuni Buddha appeared in his dharma body and personally bestowed the title of Lotus Light Unhindered Buddha upon Living Buddha Lian-sheng. Feeling that the affinity was ripe, Living Buddha Lian-sheng entered the monastic order to better serve sentient beings. He was ordained as a monk at the True Buddha Quarter in Redmond by Reverend Guoxian on March 19, 1986 (February 10th on the Chinese lunar calendar).

For over twenty years, Living Buddha Lian-sheng has devoted his efforts in three ways:

#### DILIGENCE IN WRITING

Living Buddha Lian-sheng is a prolific writer and he delivers sentient beings through his writings. The Vajrayana teachings of attaining Buddhahood in this lifetime and the spiritual state of self realization are profound. With his supreme wisdom, Living Buddha Lian-sheng is able to expound the profound and wondrous principles and teachings of Buddhism through his daily writings. As of today, he has written over 200 books. Some of his works are being translated into different languages and being published worldwide. The U.S. Library of Congress currently houses his entire Chinese collection of writing.

#### DILIGENCE IN CULTIVATION

Living Buddha Lian-sheng maintains his daily routine of meditation and practices the True Buddha Tantra at least once per day without fail. He dedicates his daily practice towards the resolution of problems and the ill fates of sentient beings, thus freeing many sentient beings from their troubles. In addition to diligent practice, Living Buddha Lian-sheng studies sutras, recites mantras, and reads extensively. He has studied the



entire Buddhist canon of sutras, vinayas, and sastras. His diligence in practice and his concentration in deep meditation endow him with great supernatural power. This has led him to realize the mind, see the Buddha nature, and attain self-mastery over life and death.

#### DILIGENCE IN GIVING DHARMA TALKS

Since 1990, Living Buddha Lian-sheng has benefited many sentient beings by sharing his personal experiences of realization through numerous Dharma talks.

Transcripts of his discourses are compiled into these volumes of work:

- Uplifting Words.
- Rainbow Accomplishments.
- Genuine Talks from the Heart.
- All about the Buddhadharma.
- The New Rainbow Accomplishments.
- Pursue the Material and Lose the Divine Teachings of the Buddhadharma.
- An Overview of the Buddhadharma.
- A Complete and Detailed Exposition on the True Buddha Tantra Explanation of the Buddhist Sutras.
- The Annotated True Buddha Sutra.
- The Annotated Amitabha Sutra.
- The Annotated Heart Sutra.
- The Annotated Perfect Enlightenment Sutra.
- The Annotated Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva Sutra.
- The Vajrayana Sword of Wisdom (explaining Tsongkhapa's *The Great Exposition of Tantras* or *sNgag-rim Chenmo*).

#### BOOKS WRITTEN BY LIVING BUDDHA LIAN-SHENG

As of today, more than 200 volumes of books have been written and published (more books are continuing to be written and published).

In addition to the Dharma talks that are given, many audio and video recordings of his discourses at the ceremonies are circulated throughout the world.



Living Buddha Lian-sheng has described the stages of his life's journey as learning the Dharma, propagating the Dharma, travel, and spiritual retreat.

Since 1989, Living Buddha Lian-sheng has accepted requests from disciples all over the world to propagate the Buddhadharma. His travels around the world span the five continents. As many as 70,000 individuals have participated in a single ceremony. It was a momentous occasion when ten thousand people took refuge in Living Buddha Lian-sheng in one ceremony.

As a truly enlightened person, Living Buddha Lian-sheng has attracted many people to take refuge, totaling more than five million disciples to date. These disciples include Tibetan tulkus and lamas, and monks and nuns from the Sutrayana tradition.

In 1988, the head of the Taiwan Chinese Buddhist Association at that time, Venerable Wuming, paid a visit to Living Buddha Lian-sheng and praised the True Buddha Tantra as an authentic and correct Buddhadharma.

In December of 1988, Kalu Rinpoche of the Shangpa Kagyu praised Living Buddha Lian-sheng's spiritual attainment as the highest among those who propagated the Buddhadharma in Chinese.

In 1991, H.E. Amchok Rinpoche, who was the abbot of a Gelug Monastery overseeing more than 1300 lamas, presented Living Buddha Lian-sheng with a precious throne that was intended for a Tibetan throne holder. The same year, four senior ranking lamas representing the four respective sects of Tibetan Buddhism, attended the Fire Offering (Homa) ceremony presided by Living Buddha Lian-sheng in Hong Kong to lend their support.

In 1995, Living Buddha Lian-sheng met the teacher of the late 10th Panchen Lama, H.E. Shalu Rinpoche at the Beijing Diaoyutai Hotel, who said, "Living Buddha Lian-sheng has indeed attained the inner realization of samadhi in Vajrayana practices. He is truly a Living Buddha, judging from the immense brilliant aura emanating from his body."

On September 5, 1996, His Eminence Lobsang Nyima Rinpoche, who was the abbot of Ganden Monastery, the 100th Ganden Tripa, and



Above: The late Kalu Rinpoche holding a picture of Grand Master Lu.

the throne holder of the Gelug school of Tibetan Buddhism, made a special trip from South India to Seattle to pay Living Buddha Lian-sheng a special visit. He brought seven gifts that he personally presented to Living Buddha Lian-sheng including one dharma king robe that belongs to the throne holder, a vajra bell and scepter, a hand drum, nectar pills blessed by the Dalai Lama through his chanting of mantras, a 3-piece lineage treasure belonging to the lineage gurus, and finally, precious medicine.

H.H. Ganden Tripa told Living Buddha Lian-sheng:

The gift of this dharma king robe belongs to the throne holder and must only be worn at the most important ceremonies. The robe is fused with infinite spiritual power because each thread was empowered with mantra recitation as the robe was being sewn. When Living Buddha Lian-sheng, Sheng-yen Lu, wears the dharma king robe, it reflects his status as the throne holder. The vajra scepter, bell, and drum are implements used by the Ganden Tripa. They symbolize the highest spiritual current of the Gelug flowing into the body of Living Buddha Lian-sheng.

Thus, the gift of the dharma king robe from H.H. Ganden Tripa is considered to be the most precious validation. Living Buddha Lian-sheng has received the validation from the buddhas, as well as the validation from the throne holders in the human world.



Left to right: H.E. Khonchok Pasang Rinpoche, H.H. Ganden Tripa, Grand Master Lu, Master Lianxiang, Geshe Lobsang Tensin

On November 16, 1996, Living Buddha Lian-sheng and his disciples traveled to India to pay homage to various monasteries of Tibetan Buddhism. On his visit, he ascended onto the dharma throne at Drepung Loseling Monastery to deliver a Dharma talk to two thousand lamas gathered in the hall. In Karma Lekshey Ling, a monastery of the Kagyu sect, the abbot of the monastery, Ghltsen Lama, held an enthronement ceremony for Living Buddha Lian-sheng. Prior to that, Living Buddha Lian-sheng met with the Dalai Lama, the highest spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism, on November 12, 1996, and they exchanged their views on the heart teachings of the Great Perfection.

In July 1996, Living Buddha Lian-sheng received instructions from the Tathagatas of the Ten Directions to write his 120th book, *New Revelations from the Buddha King*, which discussed the secret of the Tathagatas. In this book, he revealed the true identity of Padmakumara as Amitabha Buddha.

Living Buddha Lian-sheng, Sheng-yen Lu, is one of the emanations of Amitabha Buddha. He incarnated as Padmakumara to deliver sentient beings through the teachings of the True Buddha Tantra.

Therefore, the true lineage of Living Buddha Lian-sheng is:

Shakyamuni Buddha – Amitabha Buddha – Maitreya Bodhisattva –  
Padmasambhava – Living Buddha Lian-sheng

When Padmakumara incarnated into the Saha world to preach the Dharma and deliver sentient beings, all the other Padmakumaras of the Maha Twin Lotus Ponds followed and incarnated on Earth to lend him their support.

The complete path of Living Buddha Lian-sheng's cultivation began with Christianity, followed by Taoism, Sutrayana Buddhism, and finally realizing ultimate truth through his practice of Vajrayana. Hence, the teachings of True Buddha School are fused with many techniques and methods from Taoism, which incorporate the use of talismans, divination and Feng Shui to offer assistance to sentient beings. Approaches such as these accomplish the goal of delivering sentient beings by "first drawing their attention through desire, and later leading them to Buddha wisdom."

Living Buddha Lian-sheng established True Buddha School to offer the teachings that are based on actual practice and validation to the world. Living Buddha Lian-sheng promised his disciples that "as long as you remember who your Root Guru is and practice daily, when you pass away, Padmakumara will surely appear before you and lead you to rebirth in the Maha Twin Lotus Ponds."

Living Buddha Lian-sheng has spent his entire life preaching the Dharma and delivering sentient beings, and he has abided strictly by the instructions given to him by his lineage guru Reverend Liaoming (Taoist Master Qingzhen). One of the important instructions given to him was the following: "In regards to the offering of money, there should never be any set amounts. You should accept whatever is given to you." Living Buddha Lian-sheng has adhered to this instruction throughout his life, which accounts for his noble character.

To date, there are more than five million disciples in True Buddha School with over four hundred chapters and centers worldwide, including forty temples. They were established and maintained due to the collaboration of disciples on their own accord.

Living Buddha Lian-sheng views the rapid expansion of the school from the perspective of an enlightened person. In his view, great effort





should be used without over-exertion, and the rise and fall of respective organizations around the world should happen naturally. During the past two decades, True Buddha School has established several major scale organizations around the world, which include the following:

- Chinese True Buddha Vajra Association (in Taiwan).
- Persekutuan Agama Buddha Tantrayana Chen Foh Chong Malaysia.
- Majelis Agama Buddha Tantrayana Satya Buddha Indonesia.
- Majelis Agama Buddha Tantrayana Zhen Fo Zong Indonesia.
- Lotus Light Charity Society.
- The Universal Enlightenment Society.
- True Buddha News.
- Enlightenment Magazine.
- True Buddha School Net.
- TV Media Groups.

In November 1997, Living Buddha Lian-sheng established the True Buddha Foundation, and on February 7, 1998, he officially announced that he was retiring from the public life and he left all duties of the school in the care of the True Buddha Foundation.

Living Buddha Lian-sheng urged his disciples to help the less fortunate in our society. Because he cares deeply for the welfare of the elderly, he has called for the establishment of three major vocations: senior homes, hospice care and True Buddha cemeteries. These vocations will allow the elderly to depart peacefully as they approach the end of their lives.

## Heritage and Lineage of True Buddha School

Living Buddha Lian-sheng is one of the emanations of Amitabha Buddha of the Western Paradise of Ultimate Bliss. In this incarnation, he has taken up the name of Padmakumara to deliver sentient beings in the Saha world through the True Buddha Tantra.



SPIRITUAL LINEAGE OF LIVING BUDDHA LIAN-SHENG:

**Vairocana – Locana – Padmakumara – Living Buddha Lian-sheng**

SUPREME LINEAGE OF LIVING BUDDHA LIAN-SHENG:

**Shakyamuni Buddha – Amitabha Buddha – Maitreya Bodhisattva – Padmasambhava – Living Buddha Lian-sheng**

Living Buddha Lian-sheng was:

- Conferred the prediction of Buddhahood by Shakyamuni Buddha.
- Entrusted with the responsibility to deliver sentient beings by Amitabha Buddha.
- Bestowed the Red Crown by Maitreya Bodhisattva.
- Transmitted the Vajrayana teachings by Padmasambhava.

Living Buddha Lian-sheng has received the following lineage transmissions from the four orders of Vajrayana Buddhism:

- Kagyu: His Holiness the 16th Gyalwa Karmapa.
- Gelug: Vajra Acharya Thubten Dargye.
- Sakya: His Eminence Sakya Zhengkong Rinpoche.
- Nyingma: Reverend Liaoming.

## Circumstances and Goals of Establishing True Buddha School

### AFFINITY FOR ESTABLISHMENT

The prediction of Buddhahood was conferred on Living Buddha Lian-sheng by Shakyamuni Buddha. He was also entrusted with a heavy responsibility to deliver sentient beings by Amitabha Buddha and he was bestowed the Red Crown by Maitreya Bodhisattva. He received the Vajrayana teachings from Padmasambhava and he was given the ultimate prediction. Due to these reasons, Living Buddha Lian-sheng acquired all circumstances and affinities for receiving the Tantras. Thus, in an age



where the influence of Buddhism has declined, True Buddha School was established to deliver sentient beings.

#### GOALS OF ESTABLISHING TRUE BUDDHA SCHOOL

Contrary to the idea that the school was established to differentiate itself as a unique religious sect, the establishment of True Buddha School exists for the purposes of propagating the Buddhist teachings, aligning the world towards unity, and delivering sentient beings from their suffering without rejecting other religious beliefs. The school also absorbs the teachings of different religions and establishes the Correct Dharma with all kinds of expedient methods.

### Organizational Structure of True Buddha School

#### WHY THE TRUE BUDDHA FOUNDATION WAS ESTABLISHED

##### **Mission of the True Buddha Foundation:**

The True Buddha Foundation was established by Living Buddha Lian-sheng in November 1997. Its mission is to establish a strong and structured organization to administer True Buddha School. Under the guidance of the True Buddha Foundation, temples, chapters, cultivation groups, authorized organizations, and dharma propagators (masters/acharyas, senior reverends, reverends, dharma instructors, dharma assistants, and other people responsible for dharma activities) can effectively propagate the True Buddha Tantra and widely disseminate the school's teachings to sentient beings. The True Buddha Foundation also provides guidance and leadership for the future development of True Buddha School.

##### **Election Procedure of the True Buddha Foundation:**

All current masters/acharyas of True Buddha School cast a public vote to elect twenty-one masters/acharyas as the committee members for a five-year term. Among the twenty-one committee members, the seven members with the highest number of votes are elected as the Core



Committee Directors of the True Buddha Foundation. The Core Committee leads and manages all affairs of True Buddha School.

#### WHY VAJRAYANA ASSOCIATIONS WERE ESTABLISHED

True Buddha Vajrayana associations were established in accordance with the following direction given by Living Buddha Lian-sheng: “Purifying the world through the Buddhadharma, enhancing life through Buddhist teachings, and transforming hearts through Buddhist principles.”

These associations gather the spirit and strength of religious reform, guide people towards the correct path, promote the compassionate heart of Buddhism, and repay society by caring for and being concerned about others. When disciples volunteer with these associations, they develop compassion by “experiencing the suffering of others as their own.”

### Fundamental Beliefs of True Buddha School

Based on the revolving principle of “Honor the Guru, Treasure the Dharma and Practice diligently” as expounded by Guru Rinpoche Padmasambhava, and through actual practice and validation, one realizes that the Buddhadharma is a teaching based on reason and not superstition. All disciples who have taken refuge must practice the sadhana at least once daily.

Where performance is concerned, it is required that:

Outwardly—one should avoid all evil and do only good.

Inwardly—attain the goal of Buddhahood by cultivating the Vajrayana practices to purify the body, speech, and mind.

Disciples are required to observe the True Buddha School Precepts including the Fourteen Root Tantric Vows, Fifty Stanzas of Guru Devotion, and other Sutrayana and Vajrayana precepts. They should also exercise equanimity and tolerance towards all other religions.

Moreover, when disciples are propagating the Buddhadharma, they should apply expedient methods to fulfill the wishes of sentient beings and lead them towards the Buddha wisdom.



Whether one is a lay person or ordained, vegetarian or non-vegetarian, and regardless of religious creed or race, the True Buddha Tantra can be practiced by anyone.

### Principle and Goal of True Buddha School

The principle is to “Honor the Guru, Treasure the Dharma and Practice diligently.”

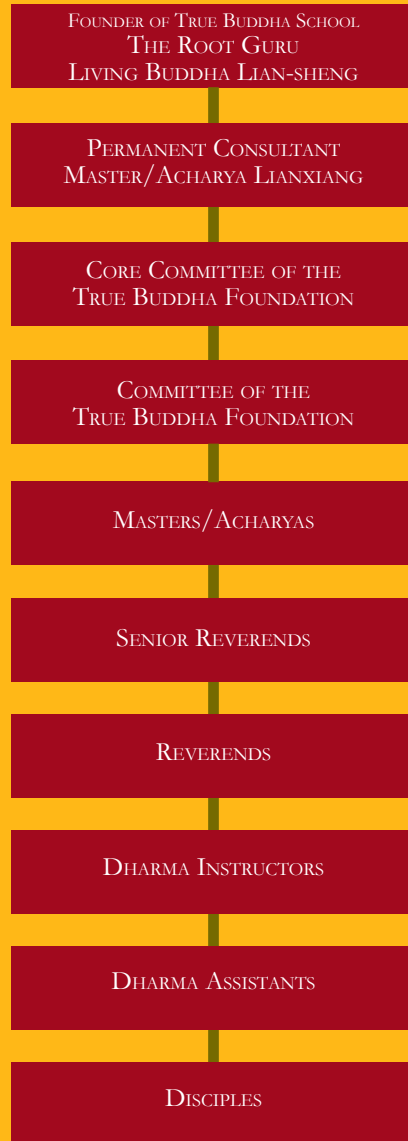
The goal is to practice the Dharma and cultivate the heart in order to “Realize the mind, see the Buddha nature, and attain self-mastery over life and death.”

### Principle and Function of the True Buddha Sangha

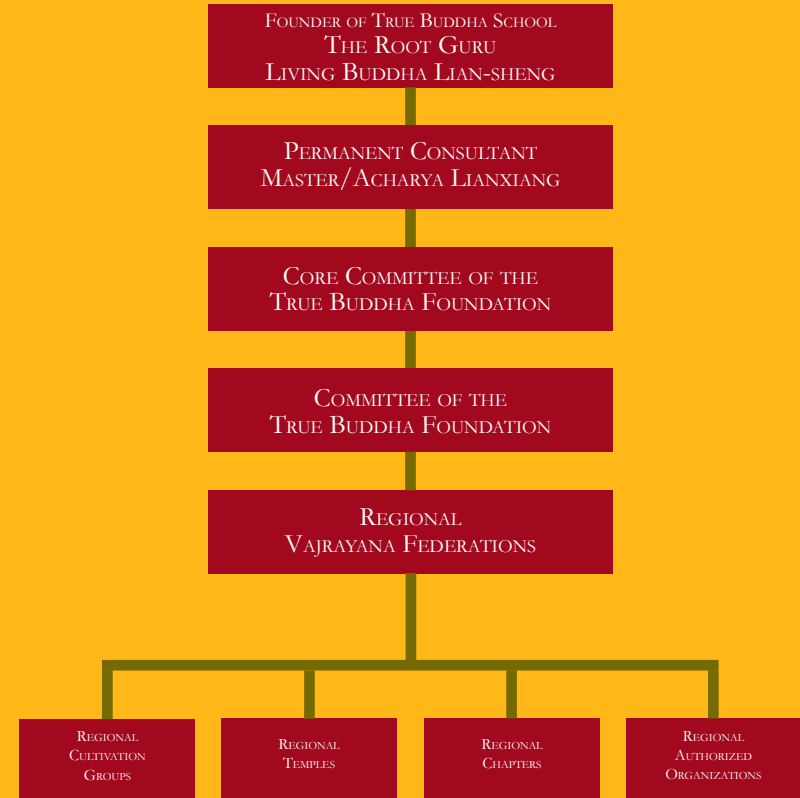
1. One of the principles and functions of the True Buddha Sangha is to act in accordance with the spirit of the Root Guru Living

2. Buddha Lian-sheng.
2. The Sangha should abide by the principle of True Buddha School to “Honor the Guru, Treasure the Dharma, and Practice diligently.” They should also work towards the goal of “Realizing the mind, seeing the Buddha nature, and attain self-mastery over life and death,” and ultimately achieve spiritual liberation.
3. The Sangha must abide by the Fourteen Root Tantric Vows, Fifty Stanzas of Guru Devotion, True Buddha School Ordination Vows, and True Buddha School Precepts. They need to study the Buddhadharma and dutifully adhere to precepts. With the right faith and right view, and the support and encouragement of each other, they can practice the Dharma, gain spiritual attainment, help society, and deliver sentient beings.
4. Sangha members should oversee the long term development of the True Buddha teachings as their sole responsibility.
5. They should also promote the wholesome development of the Sangha in order to perpetuate the lineage of the True Buddha teachings.

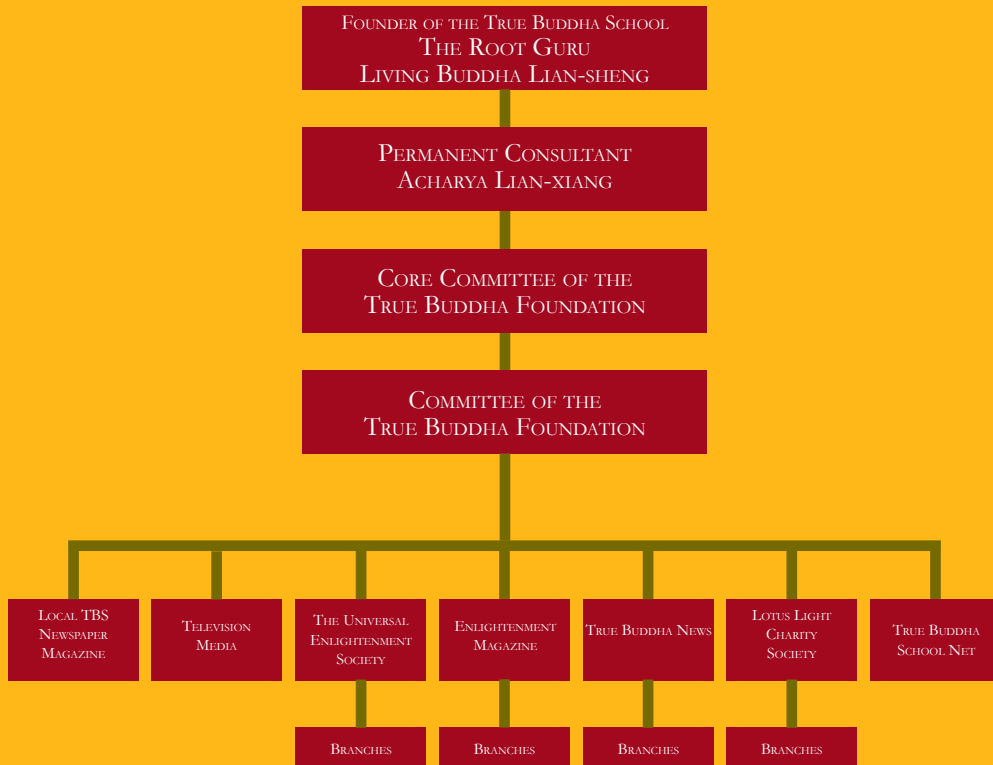
## The True Buddha School Administrative Hierarchy



## The True Buddha School Hierarchy of Temples and Chapters



## The True Buddha School Dharma Propagation Hierarchy



- Furthermore, they need to propagate the True Buddha Tantra by leading through their example. This involves the need to actualize and preach the teachings in order to liberate themselves and others.

### Extraordinariness of True Buddha School

TRUE BUDDHA SCHOOL IS EXTRAORDINARY FOR:

- The expedient methods of using the fruition accomplishment as the foundation for cultivation.
- The transmission of the Root Guru (Padmakumara) Practice, which connects the disciples to the Root Guru in the swiftest way.
- The complete set of mundane and transcendental teachings and practice procedures, that include the Eight Personal Deity Practices to suit the needs of those inclined towards Taoism, Sutrayana Buddhism, and Vajrayana Buddhism.
- The Root Guru who is validated by the buddhas and bodhisattvas of the Ten Directions and Three Times as the Holy Red-crowned Vajra Master, Venerable Lian-sheng. He is also endowed with the ten virtues of the Buddha.
- The spiritual experiences of disciples. Besides the phenomenon of spiritual experiences seen in many cases of deliverances, the spiritual validations can be viewed as transcendental accomplishments. For example, there are many instances where sariras were found in the remains of True Buddha practitioners. This phenomenon included prisoners on death row who took refuge in Living Buddha Lian-sheng and practiced diligently. Upon their executions, many relics and sariras were found when their bodies were cremated.

Thus, True Buddha School is a school based on true spiritual validations and experiences. The True Buddha Tantra is indeed the supreme Buddhadharma!



## PART THREE

### Essential Steps for Cultivating the True Buddha Tantra

#### Precepts after Taking Refuge

THE TRUE BUDDHA SCHOOL PRECEPTS WHICH PRACTITIONERS MUST OBSERVE:

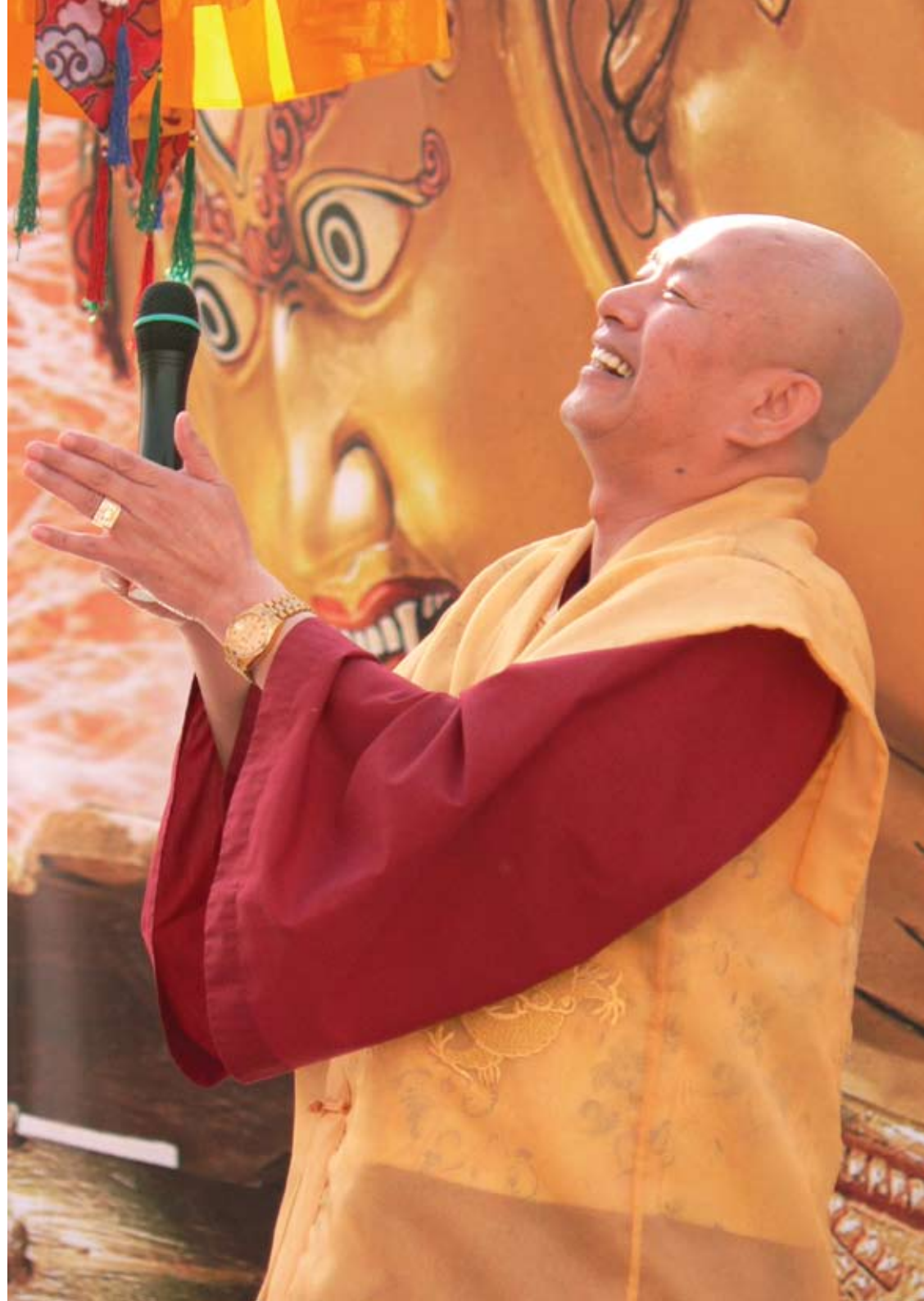
1. The Five Precepts which are to refrain from: killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and taking intoxicants.
2. The Fourteen Root Tantric Vows.
3. The Fifty Stanzas of Guru Devotion.
4. The True Buddha School Lineage Transmission.
5. The Code of Rules and Disciplines.

TEN PRECEPTS OF CULTIVATION:

1. Honor the Guru.
2. Practice honesty.
3. Refrain from indulgence in wealth.
4. Refrain from mischievousness.
5. Refrain from slander.
6. Refrain from evil thoughts.
7. Refrain from defilements.
8. Refrain from harming others.
9. Refrain from lust.
10. Refrain from carelessness.

IMPORTANCE OF THE SAMAYA PRECEPTS

The Samaya Precepts established in Vajrayana refer to the precepts held between the practitioners and the Root Guru, their personal deities, and their dharma protectors. It is a pledge of alliance.





If disciples slander their Root Guru, it is tantamount to breaking the Samaya Precepts, thus breaking the alliance. This is a severe offense in Vajrayana and it will result in one falling into the vajra hell.

TO GAIN ACCOMPLISHMENT IN THE PRACTICE OF VAJRAYANA, THE PRACTITIONERS MUST GENERATE THE THREE FORMS OF BODHICITTA

1. Action and Vow Bodhicitta (Great Compassion).
2. Ultimate or Paramartha Bodhicitta (Great Wisdom).
3. Samaya Bodhicitta (Great Concentration).

These three forms of bodhicitta are regarded as the Bodhisattva heart of Vajrayana practitioners.

## Fundamental Principles of Cultivating True Buddha Tantra

HOW THE TRUE BUDDHA PRACTITIONERS SHOULD CULTIVATE

The practitioners should cultivate single-mindedly on the correct path.

The practitioners should follow and abide by the precepts, and their cultivation should not be done carelessly. Otherwise, the offense of negligence will easily be committed.

All practices must strictly follow the procedures outlined in the sadhana rituals. In some cases, however, one may practice only the main procedures. This exception applies in the following circumstances:

If practitioners are traveling abroad on a plane, car or ship, and offerings are not available at hand, the practitioners may purely rely on visualizations to cultivate. This is an expedient method of cultivation.

If practitioners are near their time of death, they may practice only with visualizations.

Those who have gained self-realization may practice only with visualizations.

Practitioners may practice in any time and place due to the principle that everything is pure when the mind is pure.



THE NEED TO PRACTICE DILIGENTLY

All Vajrayana practitioners must place great importance on actual practice. It is through actual practice that they receive the power of root lineage blessing. Actual practice also remedies the spiritual illness of disdain towards the Buddhadharm. Through actual practice, practitioners are introduced to the uniqueness of the True Buddha Tantra. Actual practice also eradicates negative karma and allows practitioners to have constant peace and gain substantial benefits. Furthermore, actual practice helps practitioners attain self-mastery over life and death, and leads them to realize the mind and see the Buddha nature. Actual practice gives them access to the real knowledge of universal truth.

MENTAL PREPARATION FOR CULTIVATING THE TRUE BUDDHA TANTRIC DHARMA

Practitioners must have the basic knowledge of the True Buddha Tantra. They must also have faith in it and respect their Root Guru.

The Root Guru must be seen as the aggregate of Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, personal deity, dakini, and dharma protector.

Practitioners should be determined to liberate themselves from all defilements through cultivation.

## How to Cultivate the True Buddha Tantra

STAGES OF CULTIVATING THE TRUE BUDDHA TANTRA

The stages of cultivating the True Buddha Tantra begin with the outer practices, followed by the inner practices, the secret practices, and finally the most secret practices. Hence, one begins with the Generation Stage (the outer practices) and later proceeds to the Completion Stage (the inner practices, secret practices, and most secret practices).



THE PROPER SEQUENCE OF PRACTICES IS OUTLINED AS FOLLOWS:

OUTER PRACTICES:

- The Four Preliminary Practices
- The Root Guru Practice
- The Personal Deity Practice

INNER PRACTICES:

- The Treasure Vase Breathing Practice
- The Inner Fire Yoga
- Opening the Central Channel

SECRET PRACTICES

- Opening of the Five Chakras
- Heruka Practices
- Highest Yoga Tantra

MOST SECRET PRACTICES

- The Great Perfection

LEVELS OF EMPOWERMENT

1. The Initial Level of Empowerment – the Outer Practices (which include the Preliminary Empowerments, Root Guru Practice Empowerment, and various deity empowerments).
2. The Second Level of Empowerment – the Inner Practices (which include the Treasure Vase Breathing Practice, Inner Fire Yoga, Meditation on the Drops, and Non-leakage Practice. However, the Non-leakage Practice is only transmitted to a select few).
3. The Third Level of Empowerment – the Secret Practices (Highest Yoga Tantra).
4. The Fourth Level of Empowerment – the Most Secret Practices (The Great Perfection).







#### FOUR PRELIMINARY PRACTICES

By reciting the Fourfold Refuge Mantra, the practitioners generate the strength of reliance, whereby their hearts completely depend and rely on the Root Guru, Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. With the faith of complete dependence and reliance, they will attain spiritual conviction and accomplishment.

The practice of the Great Homage reflects the trust and sincerity towards the buddhas, bodhisattvas, dharma protectors, dakas, dakinis, and deities. Prostration allows practitioners to overcome their pride and remove their attachments to the ego, which in turn purifies their body, speech, and mind. Additionally, prostration provides good exercise and the practitioners can maintain a healthy body through this practice.

The practice of the Mandala Offering allows practitioners to rapidly accumulate merits which help to increase their virtue and wisdom.

The Vajrasattva Practice eliminates eons of negative karma.

The Four Preliminary Practices are the foundational practices of Vajrayana Buddhism. If practitioners can gain yogic union through these practices, they shall attain the spiritual level of “Equal Enlightenment” of a bodhisattva. Without such accumulation of merits, how can anyone practice the Tantric Dharma?

#### ROOT GURU PRACTICE

All Vajrayana accomplishments are derived from the blessings of the Root Guru because all pith instructions are transmitted from the Root Guru. This kind of transmission not only represents the affinity of all lineages, but it also represents the affinity of realizing the state of emptiness taught in the Mahayana teachings. Therefore, practitioners must cultivate the Root Guru Practice without fail.

Furthermore, the Root Guru Practice is the shortest and swiftest route for disciples to achieve a spiritual response with the Root Guru. All True Buddha disciples must commit to the cultivation of the Root Guru Practice until they achieve genuine results. Only then can they proceed to cultivate the Personal Deity Practice. In this way, they can avoid deviating from the path and avoid all pitfalls.



#### EIGHT PERSONAL DEITY PRACTICES

Some True Buddha practitioners feel especially close to a particular deity due to the fact that the deity’s characteristics and vows resonate with the practitioners. Living Buddha Lian-sheng allows practitioners to freely choose the particular deity for their personal deity practice, in hope that they may attain a swifter spiritual response. By opening this gateway to expedient methods, Living Buddha Lian-sheng has demonstrated compassion for his disciples.

Vajrayana Buddhism places the utmost emphasis on the blessings of the Root Guru. It is important to visualize the Empowerment of the Three Lights from the Root Guru and to recite his mantra 108 times in the main procedures of the Eight Personal Deity Practice (with the exception of the Padmakumara Practice, which already includes the Root Guru visualization and mantra chanting).

### Levels of Accomplishment of the True Buddha Tantra

#### THREE KINDS OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

Accomplishment of Mantra Recitation – the spiritual accomplishment attained through the chanting of mantras.

Accomplishment of Samadhi – the spiritual accomplishment attained through meditation.

Accomplishment of Fire Offerings (Hommas) – the spiritual accomplishment attained through Fire Offerings (Hommas).

#### NINE GRADES OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

- Initial Grade: Wish fulfillment.
- Second Grade: Summoning spirits.
- Third Grade: Knowledge of past lives.
- Fourth Grade: Immortality attained through mantra recitation.
- Fifth Grade: Wheel-Turning King.
- Sixth Grade: The first to the fourth level of bodhisattvahood.
- Seventh Grade: The fifth to the seventh level of bodhisattvahood.



- Eighth Grade: The eighth level of bodhisattvahood and above.
- Ninth Grade: Attainment of the Supreme Perfect Enlightenment; the teacher of humans and gods; Buddha.

### Miscellaneous Questions

#### QUESTION 1: ARE SUPERNATURAL ABILITIES CONSTITUTED AS PART OF THE TRUE BUDDHA TANTRA?

The practice of the True Buddha Tantra integrates the training of the three secrets of body, speech, and mind. When this training is combined with the blessings and empowerments of the True Buddha Lineage, the goal of “realizing the mind, seeing the Buddha nature, and attaining self-mastery over life and death” can be achieved.

Supernatural abilities are only a by-product of cultivation. Supernatural abilities do not rely on lineage empowerments and blessings, nor do they require the integrated training of the three secrets. Thus, the possession of supernatural abilities does not necessarily indicate that a practitioner has achieved the state of realizing the mind, seeing the Buddha nature, and attaining self-mastery over life and death.

#### QUESTION 2: SINCE THE TERMS “GURU,” “ACHARYA,” AND “MASTER” ARE MENTIONED IN THE FOURTEEN ROOT TANTRIC VOWS AND FIFTY STANZAS OF GURU DEVOTION, DOES THIS MEAN THAT THOSE RULES APPLY TO ALL VAJRA ACHARYAS?

Though the terms “guru,” “acharya,” and “master” are mentioned in the Fourteen Root Tantric Vows and Fifty Stanzas of Guru Devotion, they refer only to the Root Guru.

Likewise, in the early writings of Living Buddha Lian-sheng, his reference to “guru,” “acharya,” and “master” refers only to the Root Guru, and not other vajra acharyas in True Buddha School.

It is important to take note of this distinction during one’s study of Living Buddha Lian-sheng’s writings and to be clear of who one’s Root Guru is.





## The True Buddha Sutra

THE SUTRA OF AUTHENTIC DHARMA THAT REMOVES HINDRANCES AND  
BESTOWS GOOD FORTUNE

This True Buddha Sutra is the spontaneous revelation from the own heart of Living Buddha Lian-sheng, the emanation body of White Mahapadmakumara of Maha Twin Lotus Ponds in Western Paradise.

Supplication for the blessing of Living Buddha Lian-sheng:  
Om, Ah, Hum.

With reverence I make my purified body, speech, and mind an offering to Mahavairocana. The holy Buddhalocana is the dharma body, Padmakumara is the bliss body, and Living Buddha Lian-sheng is the emanation body; these three bodies being the same in essence as the Buddha's Grace.

Homage to his True Buddha lineage, and to his transcendental power that encompasses the whole universe. Radiating light throughout the Three Times, he can manifest himself instantaneously. Disciples of Buddha should constantly cry out for his pure light which magnifies virtue and wisdom.

In the past his realization was prophesied by Shakyamuni Buddha, and by Amitabha Buddha he was entrusted with the mission of salvation. Maitreya Bodhisattva bestowed him the Red Crown, and Guru Padmasambhava taught him the Tantra.

We pray you never abandon your past vows to liberate us all. As you embrace and enfold us with protection and care, empower us to quickly attain realization.

Namo Mahavairocana Buddha  
Namo Buddhalocana  
Namo Padmakumara  
Namo Living Buddha Lian-sheng



Namo the True Buddha Assembly, all buddhas, bodhisattvas, and mahasattvas everywhere throughout the Three Times.

Recite the Sacred Edict three times:

The Western True Buddha Assembly, Maha Twin Lotus Ponds, the Eighteen Mahapadmakumaras, the Holy Revered One Robed in White, the Holy Red-crowned Vajra Master, the Secret Master of the Realm of Vajra-mantra, the Great Enlightened Founder of Ling Xian True Buddha School: the Illustrious Tantrika Sheng-yen Lu.

Incense Praise:

The censer is now lit, suffusing the dharma realm, and from afar the scent is inhaled by the True Buddha Assembly. Auspicious are the gathering clouds, as we now request, with sincere and earnest hearts, that all buddhas manifest. Namó cloud canopy of fragrance, bodhisattvas, mahasattvas.

Chant 3 times:

Namo True Buddha Assembly, all buddhas, bodhisattvas and mahasattvas.

Invocation of the Two Buddhas and Eight Bodhisattvas:  
Namo Vairocana Buddha of the All-Conquering Palace  
in the dharma realm

Namo Amitabha Buddha of Western Paradise  
Namo Mahasattva Avalokitesvara  
Namo Mahasattva Maitreya  
Namo Mahasattva Akasagarbha  
Namo Mahasattva Samantabhadra  
Namo Mahasattva Vajrapani  
Namo Mahasattva Manjusri  
Namo Mahasattva Hindrance-Removing Bodhisattva  
Namo Mahasattva Ksitigarbha  
Namo all bodhisattvas and mahasattvas



Sutra Opening Verse:

*The most supreme profound Dharma,  
Is rarely encountered in hundreds and thousands of kalpas,  
As I receive this transmission and blessing,  
I vow to penetrate the true meaning of Tathagata.*

### The Sutra of Authentic Dharma that Removes Hindrances and Bestows Good Fortune, spoken by Living Buddha Lian-sheng:

Thus have I heard. At one time, White Mahapadmakumara was present at the Maha Twin Lotus Ponds, sitting upon the great white lotus dharma-throne; surrounding him were seventeen other great lotus blossoms. The Green Lotus radiated green light, the Yellow Lotus yellow light, the Red Lotus red light, the Purple Lotus purple light. Each lotus blossom was mysteriously wonderful, pure, and full of fragrance.

The White Padmakumara, silently calling forth his spiritual power, transformed the Maha Twin Lotus Ponds into an extraordinarily splendid place filled with golden light. All the flower-buds simultaneously burst into fragrant blossoms. Jade grasses sent forth a wonderful scent. White cranes, peacocks, parrots, saris, kalavinkas, and jivajiras all took on a golden hue, and sang graceful heavenly songs in harmony.

The sky filled with golden light. A pure and wonderful heavenly melody resounded from the sky. The fragrances suffused all realms. Golden sky-abodes, adorned throughout with golden lotuses, radiated splendor. From the sky there showered heavenly flowers.

At that moment, the ground shook violently in Maha Twin Lotus Ponds and throughout countless heavens the tremor could be felt. Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and sound-hearers all felt it as well and came to Maha Twin Lotus Ponds, as did the rulers of all the Thirty-three Heavens. The assembly included beings from the Twenty-eight Heavens, Lords Indra and Brahma, the eight classes of supernatural beings, and the Fourfold Sangha, all of whom came to hear the revelation of quintessential teaching.



At that moment, the Golden Padmakumara emitted the Great Wisdom Light. The White Padmakumara emitted the Dharma Realm Light. The Green Padmakumara emitted the Ten Thousand Treasure Light. The Black Padmakumara emitted the Subjugation Light, Red Padmakumara the Vow Light, Purple Padmakumara the Proper and Dignified Light, Blue Padmakumara the Virtuous Fruit Light, Yellow Padmakumara the Fortune Fulfilling Light, and the Orange Padmakumara emitted the Child Innocence Light.

Upon seeing this, all the heavenly beings were greatly awed. Then Indra arose from his seat and, joining his palms to White Padmakumara, said, "This is most rare, O Holy and Revered One. By what cause does the Maha Twin Lotus Ponds emit such great light and splendor?"

White Mahapadmakumara said, "I will expound upon this for everyone present." Indra said, "The Holy Revered One is the most mighty and powerful. Please explain to everyone present, that all Men and Devas may know where to turn."

At that moment, White Mahapadmakumara addressed Indra and the assembly as follows: "Very well, very well. I will now explain to you and all the beings of the last period of this Buddha-kalpa, and all those in the future who have an affinity with the sutra, that all may know the True Buddhadharma and the principle which removes obstacles and bestows good fortune."

White Mahapadmakumara then said, "All buddhas and bodhisattvas have, in order to liberate living beings, manifested the worlds known as 'All-Conquering,' 'Wonderful Treasure,' 'Round Pearl,' 'Sorrowless,' 'Pure Rest,' 'Dharma Thought,' 'Full Moon,' 'Profound Joy,' 'Profound Completeness,' 'Lotus,' 'Immutable,' and 'Omnipresence.' Now, there shall be the 'True Buddha World.'"

Thus the buddhas, bodhisattvas, sound-hearers, solitary-buddhas, and all the heavenly beings witnessed the Holy Revered One bringing forth the True Buddha World, understanding it to be a manifestation of the cause and fruition of great compassion of the auspicious Well-departed Ones of the past, present, and future, and realizing that the Holy Revered One came for the sake of all beings. All present were moved by joy



as never before. Then bowing their heads they made praise with these verses:

*The Holy Revered One of great compassion,  
the Secret One who is most supreme,  
had attained enlightenment in the past,  
and transcended all worldly passions.  
He now establishes the True Buddha World,  
showering compassion on all living beings.  
Transforming himself into a pure land founding Buddha,  
He descends into the Saha world.  
With Lian-sheng as his name,  
He announces and proclaims the Dharma to all.  
We have all now heard and  
shall vow to protect and uphold his Dharma.*

At that moment, the holy revered White Mahapadmakumara instructed the assembly, saying “In cultivation, the key to realizing the Buddha Jewel Sambodhi is a quiescent mind; that of realizing the Dharma Jewel is purity of body, speech, and mind; that of realizing the Sangha Jewel is refuge in a True Buddha Guru.”

The Holy Revered One further instructed the assembly, saying “If good men or women, on the eighteenth day of the fifth month of each lunar year, make ablution, abstain from flesh, and wear new and clean clothes, or on the eighteenth day of each lunar month, or on their own birthdays, call upon the Two Buddhas and Eight Bodhisattvas before the shrine, and reverently recite this Sutra of Authentic Dharma that Removes Hindrances and Bestows Good Fortune, then their supplications will be answered. Moreover, if incense, flower, lamp, tea and fruit are offered, along with sincere prayer, then all wishes will be granted.”

The Holy Revered One told the assembly, “People of this Saha world, be they high officials, nobility, renunciates, householders, yogis, or common folk, who, upon learning of this sutra, uphold, read and recite it, shall prosper above all others, have greater lifespan, obtain either a son or daughter as sought, and be blessed with measureless fortune. This is



indeed a great fortune-bestowing sutra for obtaining blessings.”

“One may have deceased ancestors, enemies, close ones or creditors who are unable to obtain liberation and remain lost in the nether world. However, by upholding, reciting, printing, and propagating this sutra, the deceased will ascend to heaven, enemies will be turned away, and those living will be blessed. If there be man or woman seized by negative forces or afflicted by spirits, or confused and haunted by nightmares, then, by upholding, printing, and propagating this sutra, all negative influences shall be banished, thereby restoring peace and ease.”

“If one suffers the physical retribution of illness and calamity, whether due to non-virtuous body karma from previous lives or to the afflictions of spirits, then, by holding, reciting, printing and propagating this sutra, ill omens will immediately disappear and the cause of illness will quickly be removed. If one suffers from misfortune, legal entanglement or imprisonment, then, upon holding, reciting, printing and propagating this sutra, all such obstacles will dissolve immediately, and calamity will be vanquished and turned into auspiciousness.”

“Should nations enter into war, then whoever holds this sutra and creates an image of Padmakumara, setting up offerings before it, immediately receives extra prowess wherein no battle can be lost. Those who recite, print, or propagate this sutra will receive every good fortune, just as they desire. All hindrances will be removed, and the sufferings of the cycle of birth and death will be extinguished.”

Then, in the Western True Buddha Assembly at the Maha Twin Lotus Ponds, White Mahapadmakumara proclaimed this mantra:

“Om Guru Lian-sheng Siddhi Hum.”

When the Holy Revered One completed this discourse, Indra and the whole assembly, including devas, nagas, and the rest of the eight classes of supernatural beings, and the Fourfold Sangha all paid reverence. They brought forth faith and upheld the teaching.

Thus ends the Sutra of Authentic Dharma that Removes Hindrances and Bestows Good Fortune.



## The High King Avalokitesvara Sutra

Namo Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva,  
 Namō Buddhaya,  
 Namō Dharmaya,  
 Namō Sanghaya,  
 An affinity with the pure lands opens the dharma doors.  
 By engaging permanence, bliss, identity, and purity, one is blessed with the Dharma.  
 Namō Maha Prajna Paramita, a great spiritual mantra.  
 Namō Maha Prajna Paramita, a great wisdom mantra.  
 Namō Maha Prajna Paramita, a supreme mantra.  
 Namō Maha Prajna Paramita, an unequalled mantra.  
 Namō the Pure Light Secret Buddha,  
 the Dharma Treasury Buddha,  
 the Tranquil King Buddha with Lion's Roar and Divine Speed,  
 the Sumeru Light King Buddha announced by Buddha,  
 the Dharma Protector Buddha,  
 the Vajra Treasury Roaming Lion Buddha,  
 the Precious Victory Buddha,  
 the Supernatural Power Buddha,  
 the Medicine Crystal Light King Buddha,  
 the Universal Light Merit Mountain King Buddha,  
 the Merit Retaining Jewel King Buddha,  
 the Seven Past Buddhas,  
 the Future Thousand Buddhas of this fortunate eon,  
 the Fifteen Hundred Buddhas,  
 the Fifteen Thousand Buddhas,  
 the Five Hundred Flower Victory Buddhas,  
 the Ten Billion Vajra Treasury Buddhas,  
 and the Fixed Light Buddha.





The Buddhas of Six Directions:

To the East the Precious Light Moon Palace Venerable Wonderful  
Voice King Buddha,

To the South the Tree Root Flower King Buddha,

To the West the Spiritual Power Flower Blazing King Buddha,

To the North the Moon Palace Purity Buddha,

Above, the countless Vigor Jewel Crown Buddhas,

Below, the Tranquil Moon Sound King Buddha.

All the countless Buddhas,

Many Jewels Buddhas,

Shakyamuni Buddha,

Maitreya Buddha,

Akshobhya Buddha,

Amitabha Buddha.

All beings in the Central Realm,

and those in the Pure Lands,

while moving upon the Earth and through the Heavens,

shower limitless compassion upon all beings,

affording them equanimity and peace,

that they might cultivate day and night.

By constantly invoking this sutra,

one is liberated from the sufferings of birth and death,  
and freed from all the many kinds of suffering.

Namo the great wisdom Avalokitesvara,

the observant Avalokitesvara,

the noble Avalokitesvara,

the expansively-minded Avalokitesvara,

the Medicine King Bodhisattva,

the Supreme Medicine Bodhisattva,

Manjusri Bodhisattva,

Samantabhadra Bodhisattva,

Akasagarbha Bodhisattva,

Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva,

the billions of Clear Cool Treasure Mountain Bodhisattvas,

the Universal Light Venerable King Tathagata Bodhisattva.

Chanting this sutra continually,

the Seven World-Honored Buddhas recite this mantra:

Lee-poh-lee-poh-deh, kyo-ho-kyo-ho-deh,

toh-loh-nee-deh, nee-ah-la-deh,

pee-lee-nee-deh, mo-ho-kya-deh,

jen-len-chen-deh, so-ha. (7 times)



## The Teachings of Living Buddha Lian-sheng

Now you've taken refuge. Let's move forward!

Need practice texts in English?

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Get all these and more at:

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[www.tbsseattle.org](http://www.tbsseattle.org) (TBS Seattle Temple Website)

[www.tbts.org](http://www.tbts.org) (True Buddha Translation Teams Website)

Other Resource:

[www.padmakumara.org](http://www.padmakumara.org)

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## Join, Share and Accumulate Merits

Please join Shared Services (SS) to promote the Dharma teachings of His Holiness Living Buddha Lian-sheng. Please note that translation experience is not required to join. SS collaborates the efforts regarding translation-related activities between the True Buddha Translation Teams (TBTTs) and various other organizations, such as US Daden. We are currently looking for the following talents:

- Strategic Planning
- Organizational Development and Human Resources



- Operational Excellence and Project Coordination
- Information and Multi-media Technology
- Marketing
- Communications
- Publishing
- Art and Graphic Design
- Legal
- Finance and Accounting

If you are interested in sharing your professional know-how and would like to put the Bodhisattva path into action with us, please visit our website at:

[www.tbts.org/eng/recruiting.html](http://www.tbts.org/eng/recruiting.html)

## The Noble Path

True Buddha Translation Teams (TBTTs) was formed in 2008. We are a group of volunteers operating under the True Buddha Foundation (TBF) of True Buddha School (TBS).

Our mission is to propagate the Dharma teachings of His Holiness Living Buddha Lian-sheng to every corner of the world with accurate, fluent, and profound translations in multiple languages, so that everyone can practice and attain enlightenment.

Our goal is to continually translate and publish Living Buddha Lian-sheng's books, Dharma talks, and articles, as well as booklets that introduce TBS and provide basic knowledge about Buddhism. We hope to engage our readers and bring them closer to Living Buddha Lian-sheng, his Dharma teachings and TBS.

Please visit our website at [www.tbts.org/eng/eng1.html](http://www.tbts.org/eng/eng1.html)