STUDIES ON HUMANISTIC BUDDHISM

Foundational Thoughts

Fo Guang Shan Institute of Humanistic Buddhism, Taiwan
and
Nan Tien Institute, Australia
Chen Bing is an advisor to PhD candidates at the Institute of Religious Studies at Sichuan University. He specializes in the research of Buddhist philosophy and psychology, and in Chan meditation. With strong foundations in Buddhist studies and a personal practice of several decades, he has summarized and synthesized Buddhism’s core teachings. In doing so, he has clarified doubts that shrouded Buddhist beliefs and practice, refuted erroneous views, and suggested practical ways in which Buddhism can develop. His monographs include *The Buddha’s Wisdom,*1 *The Study of Life and Death in Buddhism,*2 *Chan Buddhism and Eastern Civilization,*3 and *Dharma in Life.*4
The title “venerable master” as used by contemporary Chinese Buddhists appears to have been demeaned and misused, to the extent of sometimes being generally used in reference to male and female monastics. In fact, the word “master” has the Sanskrit root of “śāstr,” and is a rather highly esteemed title in Buddhism. As the *Itivṛttakasūtra* explains, the title refers to sagely monastics who have attained at least the stage of stream-enterer, and up to that of a buddha. Their presence in this world ensures that the wisdom of the Dharma can guide others towards transcending the mundane, bringing boundless benefit and joy to them. To honor their status as exemplary teachers for all ages, they are addressed as “venerable masters.” Fascicle 82 of the *Yogācārabhūmiśāstra* states:

Being able to provide guidance to countless beings and lead them to the end of all suffering, they are thus known as venerable masters; furthermore, because they appear in the world to obliterate evil and non-Buddhist teachings, we thus address them as venerable masters.

The title is also one of the virtuous names referring to a bodhisattva. Historically, there have been many—in China: Dao’an, Senglang, Huisi, Zhiyi, Jizang, Xuanzang, Huineng, Shandao; in Japan: Saichō, Kūkai, Ennin; and in the Republican period: Taixu, Yingguang, and Hongyi. All were immensely influential, and were exemplary teachers able to shoulder great responsibility. They were each often a master and founding patriarch of a particular school or made major contributions to Buddhism. In today’s Buddhist circles, Venerable Master Hsing Yun should be first among many to be honored with the title of venerable master.

With his great vows, all-embracing compassion, thorough understanding of Buddhism, understanding that goes hand-in-hand with practice, brilliant and astute wisdom, and unimpeded eloquence, Venerable Master Hsing Yun more than deserves the title of venerable master. In comparison with other venerable masters in history, he further exhibits other unique qualities such as his exceptional character, courage, insight, ability, and many outstanding accomplishments. He is particularly adept at adapting to the aptitudes of modern people through his Dharma talks and publications. He is able to explain profound ideas in simple terms, delivering deep and insightful messages found in the Buddhist canon as easily comprehensible ideas. These can be likened to sweet Dharma...
water that quenches the drought of our human minds. He is a Buddhist revolutionary full of bold, innovative ideas. His intrepid and pioneering spirit has led to many groundbreaking developments, and resulted in fifty “firsts” in the history of Taiwanese Buddhism, many of which can considered “firsts” for Chinese and global Buddhism. He is reputed as the “Martin Luther of Buddhism” and a “Buddhist Master of Creativity.” Venerable Master Hsing Yun is also adept in building enterprises, as he possesses excellent leadership, management, and organizational skills. The Fo Guang enterprise that he founded has established Buddhist temples throughout the five continents with over a million members. This has established an enduring model for all Buddhists.

As Zhang Peigeng states in *Thoughts on Reading a Person for Twenty Years*, Venerable Master Hsing Yun is “the first Chinese Buddhist leader who can claim to be an equal with leaders of other religions. He has helped Chinese culture and Buddhism earn its rightful respect.” Master Hongyi once praised Master Yinguang as: “The foremost in the past three centuries.” From the perspective of his vow to propagate the Dharma, revolutionary creativity, management expertise, outstanding achievements, and adaptation to the spirit of the times, Venerable Master Hsing Yun should at least be regarded as “the foremost in the past millennium” in the history of Buddhism. To have such a great man walk among us in the “age of declining Dharma,” and when Chinese Buddhism is facing severe challenges, is almost inconceivable and a great honor for all Chinese.

Based on his splendid achievements, Venerable Master Hsing Yun has managed to invigorate Buddhism to benefit humanity. Using his inexhaustible energy and driven by his compassionate bodhisattva vows, he has pledged to achieve his motto of: “May the Buddha’s light shining throughout the three thousand realms, and the Dharma water flowing across the five continents.” His speech and actions all present a distinct philosophy of Humanistic Buddhism. In the eyes of the world, Humanistic Buddhism has become the defining symbol of Fo Guang Shan.

Although Humanistic Buddhism was not pioneered by Venerable Master Hsing Yun, he is regarded as its implementer. Sparing no effort in propagating Humanistic Buddhism, he has brought it into the everyday lives of tens of millions of people in terms of both its theory and practice. Successfully articulating his views and thoughts on Humanistic Buddhism, he (together with Taixu and Yin Shun) is counted as one of the major contributors to its theoretical development. In over three hundred thousand words,
he has systematically elucidated the philosophy of Humanistic Buddhism. His important and comprehensive works include: *The Fundamentals of Humanistic Buddhism*,10 *How to Build a Humanistic Buddhism*,11 and the edited volume *Humanistic Buddhism*12 (Volume Ten of the *Essential Guide to Buddhism*13). Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s voluminous speeches, articles, diaries, maxims, and literary works also touch upon Humanistic Buddhism—bringing his spark of wisdom to the world. As he says: “Humanistic Buddhism has not only long taken root in my heart and actions, but it is also constantly in my thoughts.”14 It can even be said that all of Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s publications and accomplishments are formed around the theme of Humanistic Buddhism, thus establishing a broad and profound “Hsing Yun Model.” This is a milestone in the history of Buddhist philosophy.

I was not familiar with Venerable Master Hsing Yun until the last few years, when I had the great fortune of reading some of his major works. I was impressed and enlightened by his explanation of Humanistic Buddhism. I only wish I had read him earlier. This article is a summary report, an attempt to organize what I have learned about Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s thoughts on Humanistic Buddhism. It is my hope that this article can serve as a useful reference to readers who are interested in learning more about Venerable Master Hsing Yun.

With regard to Humanistic Buddhism, Venerable Master Hsing Yun delineated six important characteristics: humanity, daily living, altruism, joyfulness, timeliness, and universality.15 In reality, the character and essence of Humanistic Buddhism as discussed by Venerable Master Hsing Yun is not restricted to the above. This article discusses his thoughts from ten different aspects.

**1. From Taixu’s “Buddhism for Human Life” to Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s “Humanistic Buddhism”**

The roots of “Humanistic Buddhism” can be found in “Buddhism for Human Life,” proposed by Buddhist reformist leader Master Taixu (1890-1947 CE) during the early Republican years. It stood for the “Revolution of Doctrine”16 (known earlier as the “revolution of scientific principles”),17 one of the “Three Buddhist Revolutions”18 proposed by Taixu in his early years. Around this theme, Taixu gave a series of talks and
published articles, including a speech entitled “Buddhist Study for Human Life” that he delivered at the Thrifty Virtues Saving Society, Shanghai in May 1928 in which he systematically articulated the concept of Buddhism for Human Life. In October 1933, Taixu lectured on “How to Establish Humanistic Buddhism” at the Hankou Chamber of Commerce, and received an overwhelming response. While Humanistic Buddhism and Buddhism for Human Life are similar in principle, they are primarily distinguished by the former emphasizing the perspective of personal belief and the latter emphasizing the perspective of the entirety of human society. In 1934, Ocean Waves Magazine, founded by Taixu and considered the best Buddhist periodical circulating in the country at the time, published a special edition titled Humanistic Buddhism featuring 18 papers on the subject. Authors of these papers were all eminent monastics and lay scholars like Daxing, Zhu Mo, and Xiulu. Humanistic Buddhism became a new ideological trend in Chinese Buddhist circles at the time, and was endorsed by many Buddhists and people from all walks of life.

During the Anti-Japanese War, Venerable Tzu Hang (1895-1954 CE), who was studying at the Minnan Buddhist Seminary headed by Taixu, started a Buddhist periodical called The Human Realm in Singapore, and once published an article in Human Realm Monthly Magazine in Jinyun County, Zhejiang Province. Venerable Fafang, a disciple of Taixu, propagated Humanistic Buddhism in Thailand, publishing works such as Building Humanistic Buddhism According to the Scriptures. In 1944, Taixu compiled his past writings on Humanistic Buddhism and published it in the edited volume Buddhism for Human Life with a newly written preface—systematically introducing his thoughts on the topic. Just as Taixu was proposing the concept of Buddhism for Human Life, lay Buddhists Gu Jingyuan of Hunan and Chen Yaozhi from Hubei respectively advocated for “Buddhism for Human Realm” and “Humanistic Buddhist Study,” both of which are similar to Taixu’s concepts of Buddhism for Human Life and Humanistic Buddhism.

Fundamentally, these two concepts proposed by Taixu were ideologically revolutionary—motivated by a reflection and critique of Buddhism’s flaw of having a “non-humanistic” emphasis during the Ming and Qing dynasties. Since the Song Dynasty, against the backdrop of feudal autocratism, the dominance of the Confucianist culture, and strict regulations placed by the government, Chinese Buddhism was forced to position itself as exclusively transcendent—thereby developing an aloof character of retreating
into the mountains forests and avoiding the mundane. As Taixu states in “The Purpose of Buddhism for Human Life”: “Buddhism as practiced in the past had the intention of abandoning the realities of life, and often looked to a better rebirth or nirvāṇa, and “it was often disconnected from reality and was unable to fully deliver the positive effects Buddhism can bring.”

Furthermore, it conformed to folk religion and lowered itself to the level of superstition by engaging in rituals and funerary services. Taixu thus called it “Buddhism for Spirits.” Advocating Buddhism for Human Life was meant to correct the flawed path that Ming and Qing Buddhism had taken away from the authentic teachings of the Buddha, guiding it away from transcendent spirits and back to the realities of life. It emphasized that Buddhist practice is first founded upon human ethics, and that living a material, ethical, and spiritual life is in accordance with the Buddha’s teachings for humans. In doing so, lives are fully developed and characters perfected—thus achieving the transformation of humans to buddhas, in keeping with the saying: “When one perfects what it means to be human, Buddhahood is attained.” Therefore, Humanistic Buddhism emphasizes practicing the “bodhisattva path” of dedicating oneself in service of others and building a “Pure Land on Earth” by “improving society in accordance with Buddhist principles, thus leading humankind to progress and the betterment of the world.”

From various aspects, including teaching, doctrinal classification, cultivation, realization, and ideology, Taixu developed the fundamental theory of Buddhism for Human Life and Humanistic Buddhism, and set a path to Buddhism’s revitalization. His philosophy of Humanistic Buddhism influenced quite a few of the new generation of monastics and numerous lay Buddhists, and is practiced by many. The past decades show that Buddhism in Mainland China and Taiwan evolved mainly by following the path of Humanistic Buddhism as charted by Taixu. However, due to resistance from conservative ideology and the then contemporary social environment, the implementation of Humanistic Buddhism has not been all smooth sailing. In particular, the failure to revolutionize Buddhist organizations and property—which share an intimate relationship with the revolution of doctrine—has severely impeded the advancement of Humanistic Buddhism. In his book History of the Failure of my Buddhist Revolution, Taixu attributed the failure of the Three Buddhist Revolutions to the shortcomings in his personality and his lack of executive capability. He was confident that:
There is indeed strength in the theory and the ability to inspire others, and if one possesses strong executive and leadership capabilities, the principles and systems that are appropriate to modern-day Chinese Buddhism can certainly be established.\textsuperscript{34}

In retrospect, the theory of Humanistic Buddhism proposed by Taixu was not fully mature. In terms of its operations: “It would certainly meet with many problems; Taixu merely proposed a direction but not the solutions.”\textsuperscript{35, 36}

A distinguished disciple of Taixu, Venerable Yin Shun, who is still alive today, further developed and revised Taixu’s philosophy of Humanistic Buddhism based on his academic study of Buddhism. Compared with his teacher, Yin Shun’s reflections on the traditions of Chinese Buddhism were more thorough. He was critical of the theory of a “true, permanent, and mind-only”\textsuperscript{37} philosophy, which is the foundation for the Tiantai, Huayan, and Chan schools, and their inclination towards sudden and complete awakening. Instead, he argued that:

We should build foundations based on the simplicity of original [early period] Buddhism, propagate and explain the middle period’s practice, and understand (adopting Nāgārjuna as the model for bodhisattvas but being wary of Brahminization), and retain correct elements from the later period.\textsuperscript{38, 39}

He made Bhikṣu Maitreya—who as depicted in the \textit{Sūtra on Maitreya’s Descent}\textsuperscript{40} as “not having practiced meditation and did not eliminate afflictions”\textsuperscript{41}—the role model for modern bodhisattva monastics practicing Humanistic Buddhism, thus providing strong scriptural foundations. Humanistic Buddhism as proposed by Yin Shun was an antidote not only to the bias towards superstitious beliefs in death and ghosts, but also to the focus on deities and immortality. It further stresses the unity of the Dharma and the precepts, and pays great attention to all types of Buddhists, the youth, and the laity. His philosophy of Humanistic Buddhism has played a vital role in the development of Buddhism in Taiwan and even in the Mainland, and has also contributed greatly to the establishment of Humanistic Buddhism. However, influenced by the tradition of Buddhist Studies in Japan, he was a little too conservative and lacked flexibility. As correctly pointed out by Mainland Chinese scholar Deng Zimei:
From the perspective of the sociological study of religion, Yin Shun has indeed grasped the mainstream religious need of modern society—rationalism. However, his estimation about the diversity in modern society’s religious needs seems inadequate, and his rationalism tended to be overly absolute... It appears that the Humanistic Buddhism he proposes stands in opposition to the other sinicized Buddhist schools, and underestimate the possibility of these schools modernizing themselves. At the same time, he rejects borrowing from the successful experience of the other countries’ religious modernization. As a result, the tenets of Humanistic Buddhism fail to achieve their deserved universality.42, 43

On the other hand, Yin Shun is an scholarly monastic. He is not an expert in management who can translate theories into practice. Nonetheless, the philosophy of Humanistic Buddhism is appropriate for modern society and will certainly prosper given the right situation. Given the suitable conditions of Taiwan’s political and economic environment, coupled with the enormous efforts of eminent monastics who possess strong executive capabilities—like Venerable Master Hsing Yun and Cheng Yen—Humanistic Buddhism finally became reality.

Venerable Master Hsing Yun is exactly the person Taixu was hoping for—an eminent monastic adept in both theory and practice, “possessing executive and leadership capabilities”44 and able to shoulder the task of “establishing principles and a system suited to modern Chinese Buddhism”45—a forerunner among a new generation of monks who grew up under the influence of Taixu’s philosophy of Humanistic Buddhism. He was born during the time the National Revolutionary Army was undertaking the Northern Expedition (1927) and into a peasant family that ran a small business selling incense and candles in Yangzhou City. Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s initial introduction to Buddhism was similar to that of Taixu—he too was influenced by his maternal grandmother. Acculturated by her unwavering faith, he began a vegetarian diet and paid respects to the Buddha from a very young age. His childhood was filled with hardship and suffering that served to strengthen him for a great purpose later in life. “Constantly hungry for months, and even years,”46, 47 and “almost meeting death many times,”48, 49 he lived in fear under
the invasion of the Japanese. Deeply pained by the loss of his father as a youth, and having undergone much hardship, a character of great perseverance, tolerance, generosity and open-mindedness was forged in him, which in turn inspired his compassionate vows to save and help others.

After his renunciation at the age of twelve, he took the precepts, learned the Dharma, participated in retreats, and completed various monastic duties. In the ten long years of arduous training in the great melting pot of traditional Buddhist monasteries, he “was frequently tested ruthlessly by kalyāṇamitras and received very rigorous trainings akin to an icy, cold, and snowy winter.”50, 51 Eventually he grew into a monk steeped in tradition, both inheriting good traits from the monasteries but also deeply aware of its weaknesses and ills. During his time studying at Jiaoshan Buddhist College, acclaimed as the “Peking University of Buddhism,” he laid a solid foundation in Buddhism and the Chinese language. His penchant for writing and propagating the Dharma through text was first evident when he started the monthly periodical Raging Waves52 with his classmates, served as chief editor of Xiaguang53 (a supplement to Xubao54), and submitted articles to the local newspapers in Jiangsu province. During this period, he took to the philosophy of Humanistic Buddhism advocated by Taixu and, in his youthful enthusiasm and drive, made a great vow to rejuvenate Buddhism. As Venerable Master Hsing Yun tells us:

My passionate love for Buddhism and the courage to protect the religion fills my heart. I often ask myself: Who else but me to revitalize the religion and teach the public? Thus, a surge of energy courses through my chest.55, 56

His teacher Master Zhikai’s attention to management, and his efforts in founding schools, farms, textile factories, and other types of manufacturing also had a great influence on him.

In the minds of young monastics at that time, Taixu was viewed as a mentor. Having met him only twice and listened to one of his talks, Venerable Master Hsing Yun was not a direct disciple of him, but he did read many of his writings. As a result, he developed a sincere respect towards Taixu and saw him as a role model—in practical terms he become a faithful successor to Taixu’s unfinished work. On many occasions, Venerable Master Hsing Yun repeatedly spoke of his admiration for Taixu and his endorsement of Taixu’s
philosophy of Humanistic Buddhism. For example, in his speech titled “Vast and Grand”\(^5\) at a meeting commemorating the eightieth birthday of Taixu, he said:

I always had great respect for the Master [Taixu]. His character and virtue, as well as his compassion and vows, these have always been what I admire and have strived to emulate.\(^5\), \(^9\)

In his later years, Venerable Master Hsing Yun has recalled:

Since I renounced at a young age, I have always hoped there would be a leader that I could follow and emulate. At that time, Master Taixu recognized the severe ills of Chinese Buddhism and attempted to reform its systems, doctrine, and property. His compassionate heart and the power of his vows, his vast knowledge and spiritual cultivation, his passion for Buddhism, his courage to shoulder tasks…all became traits greatly admired by many young monastics. Although I only heard him speak once or twice, I always wish I could have done so more. Sometimes I even think: “If someday I had the opportunity to serve him, I would not hesitate to walk into fire and boiling water if need be.”\(^9\), \(^1\)

The ideas Master Taixu put forth to revitalize Buddhism, i.e. “revolution of property, system, and doctrine” have become the Dharma Gate of Non-Duality that I also took to in revitalizing Buddhism.\(^2\), \(^3\)

In July 1946, Master Taixu chaired the First Buddhist Association of the Republic of China Workshop for Conference Staff\(^4\) in Zhenjiang city. Venerable Master Hsing Yun learned of this and gave up without hesitation the rare opportunity to visit his family for the first time since he renounced. He recalled in *Hundred Sayings*:\(^5\) “Master [Taixu] told us passionately at the conference: ‘We have to establish the character of Humanistic Buddhism!’ These words shook me greatly.”\(^6\)

Venerable Master Hsing Yun perceived that “Humanistic Buddhism” was the
“fundamental basis for reviving the Dharma”\textsuperscript{67} and dedicated himself to this cause. In 1947, on hearing the news of Taixu’s death, young Venerable Master Hsing Yun: “Was devastated—like being struck by a lightning on a sunny day and was out of [his] wits all day. [His] mind went totally blank about the future, as if the sun and moon dimmed, leaving the earth pitch black. [He] was left not knowing where to go.”\textsuperscript{68, 69} As a fresh Buddhist college graduate, Venerable Master Hsing Yun saw the waning importance of Buddhism and the various dangers and hardships facing society, and he heard the screams of pain issuing from all sentient beings. Full of enthusiasm for the reformation and revitalization of Buddhism, he devoted himself to practicing Humanistic Buddhism as advocated by Taixu. He first served as the principal of a local elementary school in Yixing, educating the next generation. Learning from Taixu’s Three Buddhist Revolutions—which failed due to his lack of a home ground advantage—he and his other classmates, like Zhi Yong and others, happily accepted positions at the Huazang Temple in Nanjing, which became their base for the reformation of Buddhism. They made regulations for living together and improved monastic discipline, but this all ultimately resulted in failure. In 1949, he organized a monastic rescue team and led them to Taiwan.

After arriving in Taiwan, Venerable Master Hsing Yun witnessed that Buddhism locally was even more depressing than in Mainland China. Folk religion did not distinguish between gods and buddhas, and there was a great deal of superstition. He “felt even more strongly that only Venerable Master Taixu’s idea of ‘building the character of Humanistic Buddhism’ was able to correct the wrongs and revive Buddhism.”\textsuperscript{70, 71} In the article “Mistakes Cannot Continue Uninterrupted” in Hundred Sayings,\textsuperscript{72} he recounted the thoughts he had when he was younger:

\begin{quote}
After experiencing the ups and down of an era that entailed a series of physical and mental trainings, I gradually had a clearer idea of Buddhism’s direction of the future. I resolved to emulate the philosophy of Humanistic Buddhism advocated by the Sixth Patriarch Huineng and Master Taixu, eliminating long-standing erroneous concepts and policies.\textsuperscript{73}
\end{quote} 

After experiencing the ups and down of an era that entailed a series of physical and mental trainings, I gradually had a clearer idea of Buddhism’s direction of the future. I resolved to emulate the philosophy of Humanistic Buddhism advocated by the Sixth Patriarch Huineng and Master Taixu, eliminating long-standing erroneous concepts and policies.\textsuperscript{73} 

During his days in Buddhist college, Venerable Master Hsing Yun accepted Taixu’s philosophy of Humanistic Buddhism. He became a leading figure of the Dharma,
possessing a rather mature understanding of Humanistic Buddhism’s ideals, and had a good deal of experience practicing and preaching it despite his young age. Compared to Yin Shun who was a direct disciple of Taixu, Venerable Master Hsing Yun, while not excelling in the rigorous academic study of Buddhism, shared a greater similarity with Taixu in terms of his personality, philosophy, and vows in regard to Humanistic Buddhism. They both had an open heart and an international vision to globally promote Humanistic Buddhism in order to save mankind; both possessed the courage and strength to correct historical flaws and to never give up; both advocated for Humanistic Buddhism from the standpoint of staying grounded in the tradition of Chinese Buddhism while being able respond to its issues; both had a far-sighted vision through their outlook of Buddhism as a whole through observing its trends; and both possessed a spirit to achieve the integration of all sects and schools. In regard to ideology and spiritual practice, Venerable Masters Hsing Yun and Taixu are of the same lineage—it can even be claimed that the former has obtained the mind seal of the latter. However, there are differences in terms of their philosophy on Humanistic Buddhism and their personalities.

Although Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s philosophy of Humanistic Buddhism is based on Taixu’s theories, they both developed as an adaptation to the times. They have become more modern, more applicable to everyday life. They express themselves in a modern language complete with emotion and poetic beauty. If it can be said that Taixu had only completed a skeletal structure of Humanistic Buddhism—its theoretical basis—then Venerable Master Hsing Yun has given it flesh and blood. As for the implementation of Humanistic Buddhism, given the differences in time, space, personality, and capabilities, Venerable Master Hsing Yun is clearly more creative, better at management, and more successful when compared to Taixu. In terms of Fo Guang Shan and the Buddha’s Light International Association (BLIA) that he founded, we can see he truly realized Taixu’s “Three Buddhist Revolutions” of system, property, and doctrine, which the latter initiated but did not complete. Just as their names imply, “Hsing Yun” (lit. “clouds and stars”) is as boundless as “Taixu” (lit. “vast emptiness”), it has much more content and is more dazzling.
2. Humanistic Buddhism Deeply Corresponds to the Intents of the Buddha

Venerable Masters Taixu, Yin Shun, Hsing Yun, and others of virtue such as Zhao Puchu, who advocated for Humanistic Buddhism in Mainland China, all share the same sentiment—Humanistic Buddhism is neither a new creation nor a skillful means of adapting to the times and contemporary capabilities. Rather, it is in keeping with the original essence of what the Buddha taught and what the past masters adhered to. All the virtuous ones of the past based themselves in the Buddha’s words in order to propagate a Humanistic Buddhism established upon the earliest sources.

Even with his great respect for Taixu, and having inherited his philosophy of Humanistic Buddhism, Venerable Master Hsing Yun has repeatedly made clear: “Humanistic Buddhism is not Master Taixu’s creation, but the original intention of Buddha himself.”74, 75 In regard to the Buddha being the founder of Humanistic Buddhism: “The teaching of the Buddha is Humanistic Buddhism and all of the Dharma is Humanistic Buddhism; Buddha is authentically human, and Buddhism is authentically Humanistic Buddhism.”76, 77 All the teachings by the Buddha and all the Dharma are Humanistic Buddhism. Advocating Humanistic Buddhism is not an attempt in being different or creating a new school, but it aims to correct the tendencies of Chinese and popular Buddhism, during its period of decline, to deviate away from the Buddha’s teachings. It is to remove the dust that history has layered upon the Buddha’s teachings—returning to the time of the Buddha—bringing his teachings and the tenets of Humanistic Buddhism to light once again. The name “Fo Guang Shan” (lit. Buddha’s Light Mountain) thus brings with it these connotations.

Indeed, looking at the Humanistic Buddhism Venerable Master Hsing Yun propagates and practices, almost every one of his words or acts have an origin in the sūtras and embodies the original spirit of the Buddha’s teachings. It is authentically original Buddhism and not some new school that deviates from the teachings of the Buddha. The ancients have a saying: if we were “to rely on words to understand the meaning” then “the buddhas of the three times are saddened,” if we “deviate from the sūtras by even a word, it is equivalent to Māra’s teachings.”78 If we were to judge how Venerable Master Hsing Yun expounds Humanistic Buddhism by this principle, we can firmly say that though he has not rigidly relied on the words to understand the meaning, he also has not deviated
The following is a summary of the philosophy of Humanistic Buddhism as he proposes it:

1. The Dharma common to the Five Vehicles is Humanistic Buddhism.
2. The Five Precepts and the Ten Virtues are Humanistic Buddhism.
3. The Four Immeasurables are Humanistic Buddhism.
4. The Six Pāramitās and the Four Means of Embracing are Humanistic Buddhism.
5. The law of karma is Humanistic Buddhism.
6. Chan, Pure Land, and the Middle Way are Humanistic Buddhism.79

The above six items are all important concepts of early Buddhism and are often repeated in Mahāyāna sūtras and śāstras. The essence of Humanistic Buddhism is summarized in the Buddha’s Light Verse as follows:

May kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity 
pervade all worlds; 
May we cherish and build affinities to benefit all beings; 
May Chan, Pure Land, and Precepts inspire equality and patience; 
May our humility and gratitude give rise to great vows.80

The Four Immeasurables, conscience, paying debts of gratitude, great vows, tolerance, etc., mentioned in the verse are all aspects of Buddhist practice and teaching often mentioned in Mahāyāna and Theravāda sūtras. What this so-called Humanistic Buddhism advocates is just re-emphasizing these concepts. It calls on Buddhist disciples to actively put what the Buddha taught into practice in their lives and in society, such as the Five Precepts, Ten Virtues, the Six Pāramitās, and the Four Means of Embracing.

For a long time, many devotees only sought the blessings of the Buddha and bodhisattvas, treating Buddhism like an insurance company. All they knew of the Buddha’s teachings were temples and statues, the wooden fish and bells, and the chanting of sūtras and reciting the name of the Buddha. They only had enthusiasm for repentance chanting, eating vegetarian meals, and holding rituals, forgetting the fundamental spirit of what the Buddha taught, neglecting the Five Precepts and Ten Virtues, the Six Pāramitās and the Four Means of Embracing, and drifting out of touch with society. This led to
misunderstanding, estrangement from, and even slandering of Buddhism among the
general population—resulting in Buddhism’s decline. If we wish to revitalize Buddhism,
we can only do it through all Buddhists practicing the Buddhist path together—using their
actions to present the Buddha’s Humanistic Buddhism as it is to the public. This then leads
Buddhism to return to what the Buddha intended and with an increased vitality. On many
other occasions, Venerable Master Hsing Yun mentions the other elements of Humanistic
Buddhism—such as perfecting self for the benefit of others; being loyal to country and
family; loving one’s country; humility; social decorum, tolerance, conscience, frugality,
diligence, fairness, and unbiasedness; contentment bringing eternal happiness; admiration
and praise; the three aspects of giving are empty; Pure Land on Earth—all of which are
based on the sūtras. As Venerable Master Hsing Yun himself believes: “The Buddha’s
philosophy of Humanistic Buddhism is truth which does not change with time and always
remains anew throughout the ages.”

Venerable Master Hsing Yun delves deeply into the Tripiṭaka, and is rather familiar
with the Buddhist sūtras, precepts, and history. In his Dharma talks and speeches, he often
quotes from the sūtras. He places great emphasis on the canonical basis for Humanistic
Buddhism, especially that of the Āgama, which in academic circles is believed to be
an early sūtra. In particular, he focuses on how the Buddha spoke intimately on how
to live life well in sūtras like the Siṅgālovāda Sutta, Yuye Nu Jing, Bei Jing—all of
which have been long neglected in Chinese Buddhist circles. In the Fo Guang Essential
Guides to Buddhism: Buddha’s Light Philosophy, which he edited, he specially put in a
lesson titled Being Good: Buddhist Ethics for Everyday Life featuring nearly a hundred
essential sayings by the Buddha and earlier Buddhist masters, “in order to point out
the canonical basis of, and provide clear evidence for, the transmission of Humanistic
Buddhism.” Its contents are divided into the eight categories of: protecting lives and
the environment, management and education, family and human ethics, eliminating
the unwholesome and practicing the wholesome, the way of money management, the
way of making friends, the way of keeping healthy, and daily living. The scriptures and
commentaries quoted number in the dozens, including the Dharmapada, Āgama, Bei
Jing, Sūtra of Teachings Bequeathed by the Buddha, Collection of Writings about the
Six Pāramitās, Bodhisattvagocaropāyaviṣayavikurvāṇanirdeśa, Fo Yi Jing, Sūtra of the
Upāsakā Precepts, Sūtra on the Contemplation of the Mind, Flower Adornment Sūtra,
Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s Humanistic Buddhism: New Dawn of True Dharma

Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch and Treatise on the Perfection of Great Wisdom.87

In the volume Humanistic Buddhism,88 in the series titled Buddhism Series,89 we find that the very first chapter Being Good: Buddhist Ethics for Everyday Life80 lists forty quotes from twenty-eight sūtras, which “serve as a guide for our practice of Humanistic Buddhism, and states that Śākyamuni Buddha is its founder, and others such as the Sixth Patriarch Huineng and Taixu are its advocates.”91 These forty quotes of the Buddha are selected from the thousands that Venerable Master Hsing Yun cited while lecturing on Humanistic Buddhism with China Television Company, Ltd.

Venerable Master Hsing Yun did not merely cite the Buddha and patriarchs, but often spoke of the example the Buddha, bodhisattvas, patriarchs, and eminents monastics set for us in practicing Humanistic Buddhism. After the Buddha attained enlightenment, he was tireless in teaching the Dharma. Up to the point of his death, he continued to teach his disciples, personally begged for alms, washed clothes, swept floors, repaired doors, threaded needles and sewed for blind monastics, cleaned and applied medicine for sick monastics, carried the coffin for his late father, and worked towards saving nations. Among his disciples, Śāriputra built Jetavana, Ānanda served the Buddha, Mahākātyāyana debated with others, Purnā taught in rural areas, Upāli served many, and Panthaka swept the floors. Among the eminent monastics of China, we had Master Huineng pounding and milling rice and hiding among a group of hunters,, Chan Master Baizhang’s saying “a day without work is a day without food,”92 Guishan Lingyou plastering walls and laying tiles, Yangshān Huiji herding cows and opening up wasteland, Huangbo Xiyan farming the land and picking tea, Yunyan Tansheng making sandals, Linji Yixuan planting pine trees and working the farmland, Danxia Tianran weeding and planting—all of which are stories often mentioned by Venerable Master Hsing Yun. As for those who practice as a householder, Vimalakirti, who is “not attached to the triple realm despite residing at home,” is repeatedly praised by Venerable Master Hsing Yun as an exemplar of practicing Humanistic Buddhism as a lay Buddhist disciple.

The four famous Buddhist mountains of China, which are dedicated to the four great bodhisattvas Guanyin, Mañjuśrī, Kṣitigarbha, and Samantabhadra, serve as examples of the human spirit of Humanistic Buddhism cultivated by Venerable Master Hsing Yun. They were chosen from the many bodhisattvas in the Mahāyāna sūtras to represent Buddhism as sacred idols in the minds of Chinese Buddhists and even non-believers. Unfortunately,
in the past, people only knew of the four great mountains and prayed to the four great bodhisattvas. “After every pilgrimage, compassion, wisdom, vows, and practice are left on the mountain. They are not brought down in the hearts and minds of the people, such that the Buddhists do not have compassion, wisdom, vows, or practice in their lives, and this is not Buddhism.” Venerable Master Hsing Yun believes this is the main reason for the decline of Buddhism. He calls on Buddhists to transform the worship of the four great bodhisattvas into practical action that follows the example of the four great bodhisattvas:

We should learn from Guanyin’s compassion for all sentient beings; the wisdom of Mañjuśrī that brings light and guides all sentient beings that are lost; the power of the vow shown by Kṣitigarbha that brings the Dharma into every household and transmits it to every corner of the world; and the merits and practice of Samantabhadra aimed at the fulfillment of all sentient beings, to live according to the teachings of the Buddha in the social context of the times and make all things possible.93

3. Humanistic Buddhism Focuses on Humans

Buddhism is in fact Humanistic Buddhism. It is rich in human characteristics, focuses on humans, and has the human world, not heaven, gods, or ghosts, at its center. As Venerable Master Hsing Yun has pointed out:

The founder of Buddhism, Śākyamuni Buddha, was born into this world. He cultivated himself in this world, attained enlightenment in this world, and shared with others the deep truths he realized in this world. The human world was emphasized in everything he did. Why did the Buddha attain enlightenment as a human being, and not as a heavenly being, an asura, an animal, a ghost, or in hell? Why did the Buddha not attain enlightenment in the distant future or the forgotten past? Why did he choose our sahā world during this time?94
The fact that the Buddha became enlightened and taught here is an example of Buddhism’s emphasis on the human world, and the uniqueness of the human life. The focus of the teachings is on humans, and enlightenment is realized by humans. This understanding is clearly explained in the sūtras and śāstras. Given that Buddhist practice has humans as its focus, the Buddhist teachings should therefore start from humans, focus on human life, and flourish in the human world.

However, Chinese Buddhism has long tended toward detachment from the human realm. As described by Taixu, it has become “a religion for ghosts and gods” and “the teachings are Mahāyāna, the practices Hīnayāna.” As Venerable Master Hsing Yun has criticized:

The Buddhism in the past that was closed and reclusive, concerned only with self-liberation and individualism. It lost its humanity, causing many of those interested in Buddhism to be reluctant and turn away from learning more about it.95

Many teachers of the past encouraged devotees to give up the world, abandon their wives and children, and retire to the mountains in order to practice the path. Neglect of Buddhism’s humanistic nature has caused its declination and devitalization. Does this have merit? Or is it in error? A discerning person can see and know.96

A practice that is secluded in the mountains and only concerned with self-liberation is biased toward the transcendental aspect of Buddhism. Though lofty and free of vulgarity, this form of Buddhism has lost its humanity and goes against universal values of humanity—depriving it of any benefit to the nation and people. As a result, it has been continuously rejected and attacked by Confucians, who emphasize social participation. They blame Buddhism for the dysfunction that is found in the family and the nation. This has hindered Buddhism from becoming China’s foremost culture.

Until recently, the non-humanistic nature of Chinese Buddhism led to Buddhism being misaligned with the times. This confined Buddhism to a dwindling circle of world-weary people, causing it to wane. Yin Shun believed that Chinese Buddhism’s reverence and longing for seclusion in the mountains and forests is influenced by some of the ascetic
practices of Indian Buddhism and the reclusive aspects of Daoism. Venerable Master Hsing Yun pointed out that retiring into mountains and forests is also directly related to the severe restrictions imposed on Buddhism by Emperor Taizu of the Ming Dynasty.

Another way that traditional Chinese Buddhism (more appropriately Ming and Qing Buddhism) lost its humanistic nature was through its focus on death over life, on liberating ghosts instead of liberating people. For many Buddhists, studying Buddhism meant learning how to die well, learning how to go to a good place after death. All life’s efforts seemed to be nothing but preparing for an inevitable death, and then immortality. Non-practitioners would rely on Dharma services to deliver them after death. Seeing off the dead and delivering their ghosts became the major task of monastics since the Ming and Qing dynasty, to the extent that many even built their livelihood on performing these services.

Death, and what follows death, from the Buddhist perspective, are certainly matters of major consideration. However, creating dichotomies of life and death, saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, then placing more emphasis on death over life to an extent that overlooks the interests of life may not be in line with the Buddhist teaching of the non-duality of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa and the unity of death and life. Creating a dichotomy from non-duality can easily incur criticism and censure.

Taixu has sharply condemned “a religion that learns about death,” pointing out that if one lives well, one will naturally die well. Venerable Master Hsing Yun criticized:

Suppose a young 20 or 30 year old monk is asked by his master from day one of entering the monastery to liberate himself from life and death, as if one should busy himself with death as soon as he is born. How does one busy oneself with death without first resolving the problems of living? The Sukhāvatīvyūhasūtra, which encourages reciting the Buddha’s name, states: “One cannot be born in this land through minor good deeds; blessings, virtues, and the right causal connections are needed.” All of this shows that one cannot truly be free from the cycle of life and death without first benefiting the human world.
The Buddha “cultivated merits and wisdom for three great \textit{asam\={k}hya kalpas}, and the excellent characteristics for one hundred eons” before he became the Buddha. Without engaging in the major tasks required to build a foundation, Humanistic Buddhism will not flourish. Without serving and benefiting society, is it not selfish and a cause for ridicule to only think about self-liberation and self-interest? Furthermore, where would be the vitality of Buddhist teachings and the saṅgha be if Buddhism only concerned itself with the business of death or a better after-life?  

Society’s greatest misconception of Buddhism is that it is a religion that only performs ceremonies to deliver the dead. Without a complete understanding of Buddhism, when death comes, ordinary people resort to chanting sūtras and performing religious ceremonies to help the soul find peace. This diminishes the role of the monastics that make up the saṅgha, the teachers of all living things, to that of professional repentance chanters.

Venerable Master Hsing Yun has criticized this partial understanding and misconception that Buddhism focuses on helping the dead. Although they have long been strongly opposed by Taixu, Changxing, and others, these practices are still widespread among Buddhists and the public. This “non-humanistic” error has been passed on for a long time, and is now taken by many as authentic. A strong remedy is needed.

Venerable Master Hsing Yun has gone on further to criticize the conventional idea in Chinese Buddhism that calls for totally giving up the basics in life, such as money, romantic love, fame, and social position. He instead espouses notions like: “Making money is greedy, fear money like it is a poisonous snake. Betrothed couples were enemies in their previous lives, love is sinful, children were their debt collectors, relatives are a clan of devils. Joy is indulgence, enjoyment is bad karma. Therefore, all worldly things like money, relatives, enjoyment, fame, and wealth should be given up.”

These kinds of notions create an opposition between the Dharma and people’s lives, and make many Buddhists feel “even more distressed after learning Buddhism.” They foster a culture of shunning life and escaping the world. This makes many of those
interested in learning about Buddhism reluctant to pursue further study. Although these notions are found in Buddhist scriptures, those attracted to such ideas do not recognize that the teachings also call for letting go of attachments: “Reminding people not to indulge in it, however some people overcorrect and reject everything, advocating ragged clothing, insisting on being anonymous when making donations, deliberately having a poor diet, even to the point of asserting that fasting and lack of sleep are the doorways to enlightenment.” They forget that, in the Buddhist sūtras, there are also teachings about taking responsibility, being a moral person, and enjoying happiness in the here and now. This kind of prejudice is like when “the water that a venomous snake drinks turns to poison.”

As a response to the non-humanistic inclination of Buddhism in the Ming and Qing Dynasties, Venerable Master Hsing Yun strongly advocates for Buddhism to become human-oriented in its focus, to articulate the profound humanistic teachings of the Buddha in its thinking, to aspire to benefit others in its vows, to beautify the human world in its intention, to emphasize improvement in everyday life, and to transform its attitude from one that abandons the human world to one that attends to, improves, purifies, builds, and dignifies it. People’s needs should be attended to, so that they can obtain “peace and happiness in the manifest world.” Venerable Master Hsing Yun states that:

People wish for things such as money, love, status, power, goods, etc. We cannot negate all this things. Invariably we cannot ask everyone to become a renunciant and give up everything. We should guide people toward right thinking, and toward living a reasonable economic life, a righteous political life, a social life of service, a moral life with compassion, an ethical life with respect, and a pure emotional life.

Holding true to the original intents of the Buddha, which value life, teaching, benefit, and joy, Venerable Master Hsing Yun advocates the improvement of the present life, and urges people to maintain a healthy body and mind in accord with the Buddhist teachings. He also advocates for a blissful family life, sufficient wealth, harmonious interpersonal relationships, and protection of the environment. He encourages husbands and wives to respect and love each other, and to properly educate their children. He states:
Husband and wife are not enemies, children are not debtor collectors, money is not a venomous snake, fame and fortune are not feces. Rather, a bodhi couple can support each other in Buddhist practice, transparent finances can fund Buddhist undertakings, reasonable fame and fortune can provide motivation to follow good examples. The pursuit of peace and happiness in the present life can even be more important than the expectation of life after death.\textsuperscript{101}

The hope for a future life in the Western Pure Land after death is the basic faith of Chinese Buddhism, particularly among the disciples of the Pure Land School. Venerable Master Hsing Yun personally practices both Chan and Pure Land, and often instructs people to recite the name of Amitābha Buddha. He does not oppose the wish to be born in the Pure Land, but from a human-oriented perspective, he emphasizes building a Pure Land on Earth. He has said:

> If the human world is so important, why do we want to place hope in a future Pure Land, instead of transforming our current world into a Pure Land of harmony and happiness? Why do we want to pursue an unknown future rather than realizing a pure body and mind in the current world?\textsuperscript{102}

As long as there is no wickedness, no political persecution, no economic problems, no lover’s disputes, no traffic incidents, no environmental pollution, and there are good people who gather together, and good friends with mutual love and respect, then there is a realization of a Pure Land in this world. Why do we need to seek another Pure Land?\textsuperscript{103}

In this sense, a humanistic Pure Land may not meet the spiritual needs of Pure Land School devotees. However, the construction of such a Pure Land is undoubtedly an obligation that should be taken up by Buddhists of all schools. This is also the responsibility of Buddhism to the human world. Venerable Master Hsing Yun calls his ideal humanistic
Studies on Humanistic Buddhism I: Foundational Thoughts

Pure Land the “Buddha’s Light Pure Land.” Creation of such a Pure Land is regarded as the ideal of the members of BLIA.

Venerable Master Hsing Yun must lead his disciples to achieve this goal of building the Buddha’s Light Pure Land. To date, he has founded Fo Guang Senior Citizen’s Home, established the Da Ci Children’s Home to raise orphans and to nurture children, created the Fo Guang Clinic, Cloud and Water mobile clinics, established Longevity Memorial Park (public cemetery), and organized benefactor’s meetings. All these help devotees solve the problems of birth, old age, sickness, and death, without having to wait to be reborn in a future life. Although Venerable Master Hsing Yun himself often chants Amitābha’s name in order to achieve a state of bliss and non-self, rebirth in the Western Pure Land has never been his spiritual pursuit. Instead, he is learning from the example of Amitābha Buddha, and aspires to create a blissful Pure Land in the human world. For this, he aspires to become a monk in his next life, and subsequent lives, in order to fulfill this goal. This willingness of a bodhisattva to continue to return to saṃsāra (the cycle of life and death) in order to help others is truly admirable.

Venerable Master Hsing Yun also emphasizes the building of a “Mind-Only Pure Land,” as a basis for establishing a humanistic Pure Land. The so-called “Mind-Only Pure Land” is based on the Buddhist teaching of “when the mind is pure, the land is pure.” Keeping the mind pure, joyful, and at ease, uncovering the inner “Vulture Peak,” allows for discovery of the Buddha within. “A purified mind is a Buddha Land.”

Building a Mind-Only Pure Land is based on being at ease in all encounters, living according to conditions, being carefree in body and mind, and practising joyful generosity. The idea of Mind-Only Pure Land and Buddha’s Light Pure Land can be found in the teachings of masters such as Daoxin and Huineng. It is grounded in the traditions of Chan and the Pure Land School.

Two major Dharma rituals that have gained popularity since the Ming and Qing dynasties are releasing caged animals to gain merit (“life release”) and ceremonies to deliver the deceased; these both seem contradictory to the views of Humanistic Buddhism and Venerable Master Hsing Yun responded with appropriate guidance. Although he has organized services for life releasing in the past, and does not completely oppose this
traditional practice, he has pointed out the need to replace the superficial display of releasing caged animals with the genuine attitude of loving, protecting, and respecting life.\textsuperscript{106} This will avoid unnecessary deaths of animals and ecological harm.

The next level of “life release” is to “human release.” There are so many people that await our support and help amidst hunger, cold, and suffering; so many single-parent families that need help; so many lonely senior citizens longing for connection; so many people with disabilities that need light in the darkness; and so many victims of disaster praying for a helping hand.\textsuperscript{107}

In short, helping people is more important than liberating fish, shrimp, birds, and other animals.

Like Taixu, who rejected the holding of chanting ceremonies for the deceased as “an outright profitable display,” Venerable Master Hsing Yun has also refused any forms of commercialized Dharma practice. At the same time, he has found that this ceremony can be used as a skillful means for assisting a particular type of person. Instead of dismissing it completely, he applies regulations that have the effect of purifying and improving it. Furthermore he:

Repeatedly reminds disciples that Dharma practice should be dignified and in accord with the teachings, not a bustling social gathering. Repentance chanting and Buddhist rituals should become a way to form a connection with devotees, but should not to be run like a secular business. Repentance chanting and Buddhist rituals should truly help the deceased find peace, and console the living, making them practices for liberation from life and death, rather than a show. Repentance chanting and Buddhist rituals should promote people’s understanding of the role of Buddhism in beautifying daily life and its practical value, and should not be merely a way to remember the deceased.\textsuperscript{108}
4. Humanistic Buddhism in Daily Life

Venerable Master Hsing Yun often speaks of Humanistic Buddhism as “Buddhism in daily life,”¹⁰⁹ which focuses on the realities of life in the human realm and emphasizes the application of the Dharma to daily living. Buddhism in daily life is therefore aimed at correcting the various biases and misunderstandings that disconnect Buddhism from daily life. For example, approaching Buddhism from a singular standpoint of research and neglecting actual practice applying it, as per the saying:

Having believed in Buddhism for several decades yet still heavily burdened with greed, hatred, and ignorance, being able to speak volumes about the Buddhist sūtras but unable to let go of loss and gain.¹¹⁰,¹¹¹

A sharp contradiction between daily life and Buddhist practice can be caused by: limiting one’s Buddhist practice to eating vegetarian meals, joining palms, and bowing, neglecting the cultivation of ethics and the solving of life’s problems; only engaging in various Buddhist practices and retreats secluded in monasteries (hidden in mountains and forests); or isolating oneself in meditation for forty-nine days of self-cultivation without understanding how to apply the Dharma in daily life. This contradiction can be seen as wandering on the periphery of Buddhism with the belief that the Dharma is exceedingly deep, unfathomable, unattainable, and irrelevant to life. The cause of this contradiction is failing to understanding the non-duality of the Dharma and daily life. Venerable Master Hsing Yun emphasizes the integration of Buddhism into our daily lives:

Once Buddhism is separated from daily life, it is no longer the Buddhism we need, nor can it guide our goals and direction in life. If Buddhism cannot enrich our daily life, then there is no purpose for its existence. The teachings of the Buddha are primarily meant to improve our world, purify our minds, uplift our lives—the Dharma thus cannot be separated from our daily life.¹¹²,¹¹³

Buddhism in daily life is not secularizing the Dharma to encourage living with ignorance, wrong views, selfishness, greed, hatred, and struggle. It is not adapting
Buddhism to fit a secular life. Instead, it is to uplift the practical aspects of life with the wisdom of the Dharma to:

Use the Buddha’s teachings as a guideline for improving our life; use the Dharma to purify our thoughts; let the Dharma be the basis of how we live, helping us live more meaningfully and with greater value.\textsuperscript{114, 115}

Buddhism in daily life requires that Buddhists apply the Dharma to their daily lives, as a guide for transformation. As Venerable Master Hsing Yun says, what we call Buddhism in daily life refers to all our actions—whether sleeping, speaking, or walking—being in line with the Buddha’s teachings, as we can see in the following quotation:

Take for example the Buddha speaking of making vows: we not only need to make a vow of generosity, the same applies to the belief in Buddhism and even to the acts of eating and sleeping. When we make vows and act with resolve, the results are extraordinary. If we vow to sleep, we will sleep soundly; if we vow to eat, the meal will be delicious; if we vow to walk, even the most undulating of roads would appear flat; and, if we vow to undertake an activity, one will warmly welcome any difficulties involved. The vow that is spoken of in the Dharma can be applied to family life—harmonious living with relatives and neighbors, being filial towards elders, loving siblings, and helping friends—all these actions require vows. The greater the vow, the more the merit and better the results.\textsuperscript{116, 117}

Once the Dharma guides life, it has an extraordinary effect akin to the “Midas touch”—one will be filled with confidence, strength, and joy; it can turn passivity into proactiveness, captivity into deliverance, stains into purity, and mediocrity into purpose. When Buddhism uplifts daily life, it is most crucial that one guides daily life with the wisdom of Mahāyāna—living a life that Venerable Master Hsing Yun calls “living with prajñā wisdom.”\textsuperscript{118} There is a saying: “The moon outside the window is always the same, but it looks more brilliant when the plum flowers are in bloom.”\textsuperscript{119} Once ordinary life is
merged with prajñā, one is liberated from care. Venerable Master Hsing Yun is himself a practitioner who has accomplished the various samādhi of living with prajñā. Given his many years of personal practice and his deep observations of modern life, he expounds the essentials of living with prajñā with clarity—it is the essence of Humanistic Buddhism. His lectures on the topic of living with prajñā are quite rich, and can be primarily categorized as below.

1. Life Rich Both Materially and Spiritually

Life requires money to live. Buddhists are not required to live a life of poverty. It is not that one cannot be wealthy; in fact, the more wealth the better. But what is important is that wealth be obtained in a proper way, and more crucially, that it is used in a proper manner.

How to use money is a deep wisdom, and the best way is to create the causes for people to have access to the treasure of prajñā—which, once obtained, can be used without end. In this way, one can ensure the infinite enjoyment of money. 120, 121

Buddhism does not teach people to crave material pursuits. This is because desire knows no bounds. If one were to pursue material satisfaction without end—would one not become a prisoner of such desires? Where then is the joy? Wealth external to the mind may be important, but wealth within is even more precious. Venerable Master Hsing Yun states:

True wealth exists in your mind; if you have contentment within your mind, then the entire universe is yours. If you feel discontentment and craving, no amount of material goods will satisfy you.122, 123

Wealth that exists in our minds is obtained when the mind’s eye is open. The celestial bodies—clouds and sky, rivers and seas, mountains and trees, and the birds and flowers—are all for our enjoyment, as are all paths for us to tread. The most precious internal wealth is to find the mind of the Buddha in ourselves.
2. Harmony and Respect Within the Family

Between parents and children, husband and wife, relatives, and friends, there should be love, and all should live in harmony. The secret to harmony is mutual respect—respect one another’s freedom, focus less on gain and loss, do not settle old scores, be less calculative, and do not compare. Parents should not overly control their children’s marriage and beliefs, and instead seek to have good communication and harmony in relationships, as in:

Family members need to know how to dance the tango, moving with grace and courtesy. They should care for one another and communicate their positions. They must frequently praise, encourage, and support one another. They need to learn to be humorous and to create a warm and friendly environment at home.\(^{124, 125}\)

The secret to being a good husband is to: “Eat at home, carry little money with you, always travel with your wife, and only go to appropriate places.”\(^{126}\) The secret to being a good wife is to: “After hard work, comfort him with gentle words, prepare tasty food, make the family a place of happiness, and let him know everything.”\(^{127, 128}\) The prescription for good friendship is to: “Have a good heart, speak kind words, exercise tolerance, be fully compassionate, present gifts to one another, be thoroughly trustworthy, be full of gratitude, show a little sympathy, have full respect, and do a few favors.”\(^{129, 130}\)

3. A Life of Service Through Work

Living in the world, one should work energetically in service of people and society. “One who does not work is the poorest among men; the greatest hardship in life is loneliness and boredom.”\(^{131, 132}\) Without work, one is equivalent to a zombie. Only in work can one realize the value of life; only in work, can one find wealth, life, and affinities. On this, Venerable Master Hsing Yun says:

Many find that work is tough and stressful—that is because they treat work as a method to earn money and fame, are selfish, and
will eventually get tired of it. If one can embody the qualities of loving kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity in their work, treat it as an offering of the Dharma, give others confidence, give others hope, give others joy, and give others assistance, then one will be very happy at work.\textsuperscript{133, 134}

Even if one becomes a monastic or a meditator, one should still work and serve others. In labor, one practices Buddhism by regarding work as an opportunity to train the body and mind, express themselves, experience life’s purpose, and seek enlightenment. This has always been a Chan tradition, and Venerable Master Hsing Yun has continued it by implementing Buddhist education, stipulating that the Buddhist college students engage in monastic tasks on a daily basis. As for himself, Venerable Master Hsing Yun works tirelessly to propagate the Dharma, and has kept it up for many decades. He takes joy in being busy and volunteering to benefit society. In “living a purposeful and joyful busy life every day,”\textsuperscript{135, 136} he serves as a glorious exemplar for the monastics of Humanistic Buddhism.

4. An Ethical Life of Samyak-saṃbodhi

Compassion and ethics are the fundamental principles that Buddhism employs to handle interpersonal relationships and maintain harmony. Buddhists should be compassionate, treat others kindly, and strictly adhere to ethics. The basis of ethics are the Five Precepts of refraining from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and consuming intoxicants. They are primarily centered around not infringing upon others. Only by keeping the Five Precepts can one have integrity and the world have harmony. As stated by Venerable Master Hsing Yun:

However, the Buddhist precepts tend to over-emphasize the negative approach to preventing evil, and are lacking a spirit of positively engaging with virtue. The Vinaya mentions the prohibition of this or that. What we need today are statements that we should do this or that. Therefore, we should understand that the Noble Eightfold Path is the Vinaya, that all practices
embodied within the Six Paramitas are the *Vinaya*, the Four Means of Embracing are also the *Vinaya*, and acting to benefit all sentient beings is also the *Vinaya*.\(^{137,138}\)

In addition to refraining from unwholesome acts, we should also engage in wholesome acts, and at the very least we should aspire to do one every day. In doing so, we can assist others and create harmonious interpersonal relationships. Venerable Master Hsing Yun summarizes the secret to harmonious living, based on the sūtras and his experience of dealing with the world, with the following four-line adage:

You are important and I am not;
You enjoy happiness, while I take on suffering;
You are right, and I am wrong; and,
You can have all, while I keep nothing.\(^{139,140}\)

5. A Life of Purified Emotions

Humans are sentient beings, and thus can hardly be separated from emotions for even a single moment. Emotions can bring us joy, but also difficulties such as familial, societal, and mental problems. The Dharma places importance on emotions and promotes their purification. By “transforming emotions through wisdom, using compassion as one’s expression of emotion, using the Dharma to regulate our emotions, and using ethics to guide emotions,”\(^{141}\) we can turn emotions that are frequently compulsive into true Dharma emotions of love based upon service and giving. “True relationships should be obtained from the giving of oneself.”\(^{142,143}\) “True love is not possessing each other, but an exchange of life. Furthermore, it is an infinite service and a gift to all beings.”\(^{144,145}\) We should turn the love between husband and wife, siblings, relatives, and friends into the sagely love for country and society, so as to grow our compassion for all humankind, and even to all beings. In addition, we should elevate it into the universal love of buddhas and bodhisattvas. A great compassion of “wishing for all beings to transcend suffering, while not seeking peace and happiness for oneself.”\(^{146}\)

Living a life with prajñā, as advocated by Venerable Master Hsing Yun, has many more aspects:
1. Regarding sentient beings as important as my own life—expanding the sense of self into that of the greater self, merging with the masses, turning selfishness into fairness, turning one’s focus on self into a focus on all beings, and living in harmony with them.

2. A life of repentance and forbearance—saying “I’m wrong,” “I’m ashamed,” and “It is my mistake” (for example) to the Buddha, elders, parents, and friends. Forbearing our own subjective attachments, biases, selfishness, personal grievances, hatred, impulses, emotions, and instead turning them into respect for others, right views, caring for needs and interests of the majority, repenting one’s mistakes, and bravely shouldering responsibilities.

3. A life of giving and charity—understanding that having a lot of money is not equivalent to possessing wealth. Only by joyfully giving does one become wealthy. One should therefore develop the habit of giving and donating in order to grow one’s fields of merit. Charity is not just sponsoring the building of monasteries, printing of sūtras, erecting statues of the Buddha, or releasing living creatures, other acts like sponsoring culture and education, donating to charitable institutions, joyfully helping others, alleviating poverty and sickness, helping others to resolve their worries, and even a smile or a kind word are also forms of giving.

4. A life of “retreating as a means to advance”—when we meet with difficulties and obstacles, if we maintain an attitude of “taking a step back, then the world is as boundless as the sea and sky,” and bear in the mind the ancient saying of “To Return to the Shore.” Where then will we not find a peace and prosperity?

5. A life regarding short as long—treasure precious time, always using bits and pieces of it to practice and improve oneself, not wasting a single moment, then one may extend one’s life.

6. A frugal life—being thrifty with material goods, money, time, emotions, and wisdom. The basis of living with prajñā is the middle way: “Buddhism as practiced in daily life should be living within the middle way of neither empty nor full,
cold nor hot, greedy nor spartan, and neither attached nor detached."\textsuperscript{149, 150}

Venerable Master Hsing Yun is a mentor full of wisdom, approachable and respectable. In his countless lectures and interactions with people, he speaks of the Dharma in accordance with the capacities of the listener to understand, whether they be young, elderly, women, officials, doctors, or staff. He teaches them how to live their lives well according to the Dharma. His delivery covers many aspects of life, is practical, and easy to apply. In his teachings and writings, there are many adages and sayings, of which over a thousand are featured in \textit{Humble Table, Wise Fare};\textsuperscript{151} the majority point to the essentials of living with prajñā. Here are a few:

- Business success requires harmony with others. The key to harmony is mutual respect.
- It is better to cultivate the mind, emphasize moral principles, be rational, and believe in the truth than to seek advice from a fortune-teller.
- Patience and tranquility bring good feelings. Modesty brings good affinity.
- Magnanimity leads to tolerance. Tolerance leads to responsible actions. Diligence lets you reach your goal. Frugality will make you rich.
- One more friend is one less enemy. A day of hard work is a day of satisfaction.
- Don’t worry about scarcity: be rich in your mind. Don’t worry about poverty: be your own master.
- When you visit a new place, try to learn about it. Asking questions, you will learn.
- Thinking requires fresh ideas. Working requires real effort.
- Illness is cured by a doctor. Madness is cured by yourself.
- A life of receiving is poor. A life of giving is rich.
- The courage to fail brings the hope of success. Diligence brings a good harvest.
Being used by others is a kind of affinity. Helping others is helping self.

Powerful and intelligent people can be tolerant. Tolerance reveals courage, ability, dedication, and responsibility.

The truly deaf do not listen to good advice. The truly blind do not look at others’ good deeds. The truly dumb never speak well of others. The truly retarded reject the truth.

People lose who fight. People win who yield.

Look at the road before you cross it. Think before you speak. Plan carefully before you act. Study a new god before you worship it.

A manager must first manage himself. A leader must make his actions match his words.

See endless worlds in a grain of sand. Hear truth in the roar of raging waters. Grasp eternity in a moment’s cause and condition. Discern your Buddha nature in the bright moon and cool breeze.

These adages contain a deep philosophy and are replete with a literary beauty. Easy to recite and remember, they are the gems of Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s living prajñā, and are richer in content and more applicable to modern life than Hong Zicheng’s Caigentan. The first volume of Humble Table, Wise Fare has already reached a circulation of over a million copies. It is a work of infinite merit—well-loved by and immensely beneficial to readers.

5. Humanistic Buddhism Gives Others Joy

Giving others joy is one of the four creeds followed by members of the BLIA. It is a philosophy unique to Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s Humanistic Buddhism, not previously mentioned by others such as Taixu and Yinshun. Spreading joy is the antidote to the “disease of pessimism” shrouding traditional Buddhism. This disease emerged from a biased understanding of the truth of suffering mentioned in the Dharma. Although
being subjected to various sufferings is indeed a problem of the human realm, singularly emphasizing suffering can easily lead people to lose their confidence in life and “make the world even more miserable.”\textsuperscript{154, 155} This caused many Buddhists to lead most unhappy lives devoid of joy. As Venerable Master Hsing Yun reveals:

Look at those practitioners who have no emotional expressions on their face and have no passion in their hearts. They dare not speak or laugh when they should. How then can they bring joy to the world, and bring happiness and peace to society?\textsuperscript{156, 157}

Venerable Master Hsing Yun has pointed out that instead of suffering, joy is the purpose of Buddhism. The reason why Buddhism discusses suffering is so it can come face-to-face with its reality in order to discover how to eliminate it and achieve the joy of an eternal liberation. The purpose of Buddhism is joy, which is also the mental state necessary for practicing Buddhism, as the following shows:

All buddhas become enlightened because of joy, all the great bodhisattvas liberate all living beings from suffering are because of joy, and Wheel-Turning King protects all his people because of joy.\textsuperscript{158, 159}

Joy is the core of the truth in Buddhism, and also the essence of practicing the Dharma.\textsuperscript{160, 161}

The following are the excellent functions of joy:

With joy, a family will definitely be united and tolerant, and hence build a better future. With joy, a society has a strong backing. The joy of a nation is derived from its people living in peace and working happily. To be aware of joy allows for the creation of joy, and the spread of joy—this is the development of human nature and the uplifting of human qualities.

Joy is loved by all living beings; it is also the goal of practicing the Dharma. The “immeasurable joy,” found among the “Four Immeasurable Minds” (the four
brahmavihāras), is a practice common to all Buddhist schools. In addition, one of the merits of nirvāṇa is joy, and the first ground of a bodhisattva is called the ground of joy. In the hall at the temple gate of Chinese monasteries, we find Maitreya with his wide, joyful smile and his belly that can tolerate all. This represents that Buddhism welcomes people with joy and offers joy to all living beings. Joy resolves hatred and resentment, joy makes human relationship harmonious, joy brings health and longevity, and joy creates a warm atmosphere in the human realm. To give joy to others, one must first be happy, and for one to be happy one must be aware that one’s mind has an inexhaustible treasure trove of joy. From this source, we can cultivate a happy character to maintain a joyful heart and use that to resolve sorrow and worries. As Venerable Master Hsing Yun says:

Although the troubles in the human realm are many, at minimum, do not bring these troubles and sorrows of the day to bed—sleep in peace at night; do not bring sorrow and sadness to the dining table—eat with joy instead. Do not bring sadness to the next day, for it will show on your face for others to see, and in turn influence them as well.

Venerable Master Hsing Yun is a born bodhisattva of joy, whose appearance also very much resembles Maitreya (Master Qici), who welcomes visitors to monasteries. He says in Hundred Sayings: Joy Will Fill the World: “To fill the world with joy is my long-cherished wish.” He is an optimist who believes that life is full of joy. In his opinion, “although suffering exists, if we can overcome it with strength, we can better understand the meaning of happiness.” He admonishes people in saying: “It does not matter if we do not have anything to give to others. The most important thing is to fill the world with joy.” He advocates that one should say three good sentences when meeting people (such as “How are you?”; “The weather is fine.”; “Hello to all of you!”) so that others can obtain joy from them also. He teaches people how to be a “lively” person who smiles as an offering to everyone. He suggests that families to be joyful when they meet, or not meet at all. If there is a quarrel between husband and wife, one round is sufficient—just as the winner between martial art experts is in the first round. Married couples should not let quarrels carry on. One should stop anger before it comes out of one’s mouth, keep it from showing on one’s face, and even prevent it from arising in one’s mind. If there is
no contention in one’s mind, then one’s face will naturally be peaceful and pleasant. He further advises that people should:

Frequently view sentient beings with eyes of compassion—paying attention to, giving warmth to, and admiring them. Frequently say kind and pleasant words to give people joy—words of encouragement, constructiveness, and encouraging praise. Frequently smile, expressing compassion and giving peace. With compassionate eyes, smiling face, and kind words, we create a Pure Land here and now.”  

He advocates living a life of admirable merits:

For instance, nodding heads to say hello, giving small favors as a means of service, and offering appropriate praise and sincere concern—these are all part of an ethical life of merit. When one obtains delicacies, sharing them with friends will make the food even more delicious. When one hears good advice, passing it on to friends will make the world even more expansive; and, if one can share the Dharma with friends (or even all sentient beings), then life will be more beautiful, fulfilling and meaningful. Let us not forget to wear smiles at all times; to always “say hello,” to warmly greet all we meet; and to dedicate the merit for others’ benefit into our daily life.

Venerable Master Hsing Yun emphasizes transcending individual happiness and seeking happiness for all sentient beings. In a lecture in Buddhism and Life (I), he says:

Personal pleasures are limited. For example, if a person enjoys television programs on his or her own, it is less interesting than if appreciated together with others. In addition, sharing personal joy with others would not affect the former...instead it would increase it.
In order to build personal joy on the foundations of other people’s happiness, one must expand one’s small ego and instead seek happiness through a greater self. “True joy has to be sought through all sentient beings; true joy is discovering the treasure of one’s mind through the truth.”179 This is the greatest joy that Buddhism can give to the human realm.

Venerable Master Hsing Yun points out that the joy advocated by Humanistic Buddhism is not the same as that of worldly pleasures. It is “rather regarding the Dharma and emptiness as joy—which is true joy. In regard to worldly objects, we do not necessarily have to possess them to be happy—the joy of using them is greater than that of possessing them.”180, 181

6. Engaged and Enterprising Humanistic Buddhism

Active engagement with the world is a distinct characteristic of Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s philosophy of Humanistic Buddhism. “Engagement is more important than transcendence,”182 and “careers engaged with the world with a spirit of transcendence”183— are emphasized for members of BLIA. Advocacy for engagement is a critical response to Chinese Buddhism’s tendency towards the negative attitude of transcendence and escape from the world. As Venerable Master Hsing Yun reflected in a talk:

In the past, we Chinese Buddhists always thought highly of escaping from the world and practicing in the mountains. Even if one were to live in cities, it was preferred that one does not involve oneself with mundane matters. The result is that the passion of Mahāyāna Buddhism to help the world cannot be ignited, with the effect of causing people to misunderstand Buddhism, and to see it as a negative and escapist religion. Buddhism as a result, became gradually isolated from society.184, 185

The reason for the decline of Buddhism today is the blatant neglect for the necessities of life and the zealousness in pursuing otherworldly liberation. This led to people seeing Buddhism as negative and escapist… We have lost connection with the realities
of life in the human realm. If we were to speak day and night about transcendence, yet not love our nation, be unfilial to our parents, and not on good terms with our relatives and friends—do we still have the right to exist in the world and society?186, 187

Looking around the world, we observe that religions are generally very advanced and popular in developed nations, but most people in China think religions are unnecessary. Buddhism is in a state of decline—certain Buddhist leaders do not encourage Dharma propagation, and neither sacrifice nor offer service in order to benefit beings. They do not place importance on everyday life. Instead, they insist on practicing in the mountains, individual retreats and abandoning society. This prevents the sacred teachings of the Buddha penetrating society and reaching people. Consequently, Buddhism is neglected and replaced by the spread of superstition and unorthodox beliefs. Faced with such a situation, Venerable Master Hsing Yun was greatly dismayed, vowing to turn the tide by revitalizing Buddhism and maximizing the benefit it offered society. He points out that while transcendence is the ultimate goal of Buddhism, it does not encourage isolating oneself from society. In fact, this-worldliness and other-worldliness are two sides of the same coin, as the Sixth Patriarch Huineng says:

The Dharma is within the world,
Apart from this world there is no enlightenment.
Seeking bodhi apart from the world
Is like looking for a rabbit’s horn.188

Apart from the world there can be no Dharma.
“Only when one understands the conventional practices of the world is one ready to speak of transcendence.”189, 190 It is necessary to rejuvenate the Dharma in the modern day by understanding the spirit of the Dharma’s non-dual engagement in the world and its transcendence from it. We should first engage in worldly careers to guide people towards an acceptable standard of living, a harmonious family, and a lofty spiritual life. Only by first having peace and progress for society can we then seek a transcendent path. Venerable Master Hsing Yun says: “We approve of transcendence, but it first requires a spirit of engagement, and with that we can further uplift the former.”191, 192

An important reason
for the transcendent character of Chinese Buddhism was the misunderstanding among some Dharma propagators that there is no difference between the practice of a layperson and a monastic. Therefore, the laity were taught and assessed using methods suitable for monastics—requiring them to engender a transcendent spirit, terminate worldly affections, become vegetarian, perform morning and evening prayers, and meditate for long periods. This resulted in many lay Buddhists mistakenly being taught to disregard their families and societal responsibilities, focusing on their spiritual practice and personal liberation. In turn, their families were neither harmonious nor their careers successful—they were criticized for being negative and selfish. They did not gain enlightenment, nor lead good human lives.

To this day, such situations are commonplace among Buddhists. In response to these biases and shortcomings, Venerable Master Hsing Yun strongly emphasizes the need to distinguish separate Buddhist practices between the laity and monastics; he believes that “Hīnayāna ascetic monasticism is not suited to Buddhism as practiced by the laity.” Instead, Mahāyāna Buddhism is precisely suited to the laity. Venerable Master Hsing Yun is adept at educating the laity in accordance to their individual capacities, teaching people to follow the Buddha’s advice as found in sūtras such as the Siṅgālovāda Sutta and Yuye Nu Jing. This allows people to live an enlightened life—to keep ethical standards, to fulfill one’s obligations, and to benefit all sentient beings by unselfish service. It is understood that these are performed in the various capacities of each individual, but need to be in line with the Mahāyāna spirit. Venerable Master Hsing Yun deeply understands the lives and mentality of the laity; his teachings on how the laity can practice are practical and easy to relate to. This is a rare talent amongst eminent monastics, now and throughout the ages.

As for monastics, Venerable Master Hsing Yun proposes that they should practice the Mahāyāna path via active social engagement, focusing on work that propagates the Dharma and benefits all sentient beings. In contrast to the laity’s engagement-before-transcendence, monastics should first have an attitude of transcendence before engaging in worldly careers. The primary foundation of transcendence is understanding life’s impermanent quality, distancing oneself from material desires, minimizing affections, and being humble. As for those who desire to enter into retreats despite only having been a monastic for a short time, Venerable Master Hsing Yun is critical and cautions that they
are like withered seeds. He emphasizes that practice should be realistic without flights of fancy, perfecting one’s character and offering service to others gradually. He created the conditions for Fo Guang Shan monastics to take turns going on retreats, but also stipulated that they have to return to work, serve others, and practice in their daily life when the retreat is finished. Those with weak Mahāyāna vows and few capabilities, who pursue practice in retreat but otherwise seek an idle life, are criticized: “Put nicely, it is called practice, but in reality they are deserters of the bodhisattva path.”

Venerable Master Hsing Yun also points out that engagement in the world does not equate to revelling in the world and its desires, but rather to engaging in worldly careers with a transcendent spirit:

> Without an attitude of transcendence, one will be greedy and attached to the material world when engaging in worldly careers; with such an attitude, no matter the depth of one’s engagement, officials will not hanker after wealth and army generals will not fear death. Seeing money and facing death without being affected are strengths that grow out of a transcendent attitude.

A transcendent attitude is nothing other than a right understanding and liberation from wrong views, afflicted attitudes, and desire for personal gain. An engaged Humanistic Buddhist should, with vigor and bearing the responsibilities of a bodhisattva’s engagement, exercise an enterprising spirit of active involvement in building up the human realm, paying attention to issues concerning the national interest, to public wellbeing, and to society and the human spirit.

Venerable Master Hsing Yun strongly believes that Buddhism contains the wisdom to guide all cultures of humankind, and the methods to govern and benefit all people: “For all the problems in this world, Buddhism has the solutions. Therefore, Buddhists should take the initiative to shoulder the responsibility of purifying society.” He encourages Buddhists, including monastics, to be responsible citizens, and to care for the nation, society, and people. Since the Ming and Qing dynasties, forced by imperial orders to retreat into mountains and forests, monastics have developed a lofty disregard for the world and have distanced themselves from mundane affairs. As a result, Buddhism could not fulfil its function of educating people. In truth, renunciation is not abandoning the
nation. So in this democratic era, monastics should confidently participate in society and provide welfare for the people. Male monastics should ideally be qualified as doctors and female monastics qualified as nurses or kindergarten teachers. Alternatively, monastics can be army or prison chaplains, counselors, or university professors.

In accordance with the non-duality of the Dharma and worldly concerns, Venerable Master Hsing Yun proposes that we take: “Dharma as the essence and worldly knowledge as the function.” He further advocates that Buddhists should ground themselves in the wisdom of the Dharma, as well as master skills in fields such as astronomy, geography, medicine, mathematics, navigation, business, and psychology. In doing so, one gains the means of serving society and a position to observe societal problems with the right understanding of the Dharma. One can:

Apply the wisdom of the Dharma to provide solutions which are in accordance with truth and one’s capabilities for issues such as employment, economics, international relations, democracy, human rights, natural ecology, educational reforms, racial conflicts, eugenics, health, environmental protection, domestic violence, in-vitro fertilization, organ donation, geomancy, and divination. In addition, the essence of the Dharma can be combined with functional knowledge of medicine, psychology, and biochemistry to dispel modern day myths regarding suicide, capital punishment, nuclear weaponry, euthanasia, human cloning, and so on. 

In response to various issues that people are concerned about, Venerable Master Hsing Yun has spoken at length in: *A Buddhist Perspective of Wealth, A Buddhist Perspective of Morality, A Buddhist Perspective of Women, A Buddhist Perspective of Happiness and Longevity, A Buddhist Perspective of Politics, A Buddhist Perspective of Loyalty, A Future Vision of Buddhism, The Buddhist Perspective on Life and Destiny, A Buddhist Perspective of Treatment of Social Problems, A Buddhist Perspective of Problems with Popular Customs, A Buddhist Perspective of Treatment of Mental Disorders, and Speaking of Love and Affection.* Furthermore, the volumes *Buddhism and Study about the World* and *Applied Buddhism* are in the collections of Fo Guang
Essential Guides to Buddhism. In addition, the volumes of Use of the Teachings in the Buddhism Series more broadly discuss the relationship between Buddhism and a large range of fields such as law, philosophy, science, education, management, tourism, agriculture, forestry, environmental protection, art, customs, business, transport, publication, architecture, conferences, and counseling. They cover in detail the unique wisdom and practical value that Buddhism offers towards resolving these issues, while also providing revealing critiques of wrong views, superstitions, and the limitations of worldly knowledge. In terms of its content, these publications discuss almost all societal problems and disciplines, whether in the humanities or sciences. In the recent history of Buddhism, only Taixu with his right views, understanding, and erudition has commented with a similarly broad range of worldly knowledge. However, Taixu covers less ground than Venerable Master Hsing Yun.

Not only has Venerable Master Hsing Yun critiqued worldly knowledge using right views of the Dharma, and includes worldly knowledge in his discourses to benefit people, he has also successfully founded many institutions. These include cultural, educational, and medical services. He also initiated a series of social movements, including the Reclaim Our Minds Campaign, Seven Admonitions Campaign, Train of Compassion and Love, Three Acts of Goodness Campaign, World Buddhist Examination, and Promoting the Dharma in Prisons. These campaigns helped Buddhism turn away from its traditional practice of retreating into the mountains and forests, and instead engaged society with an enterprising attitude. In creating happiness for the people, Venerable Master Hsing Yun has created a fresh image for Humanistic Buddhism through active engagement with the world.

7. A Modernized Humanistic Buddhism

Modernization as explained by Venerable Master Hsing Yun involves progress, innovation, adaptation, and advancement. Societies and countries are constantly seeking to develop and modernize in order to keep up with the times. The same applies to Buddhism—since its founding by the Buddha, it has always kept abreast with the times. In line with the principles of teaching according to individual levels of understanding and in accordance with truth and capabilities, Buddhism has improved its methods of propagation
in response to contemporary politics, economics, and culture. Take for example the sūtras: they have evolved from being orally transmitted during the Buddha’s time to palm-leaf manuscripts, to woodblock prints, to the printing press, and eventually to today’s electronic formats. With the transmission of Buddhism into China, Buddhism adopted a different style from that of India as it adapted to Chinese culture. The modernization of Buddhism is not an innovation, but rather a return to old ways. At its core, it is a “response to the needs of each era, and with the most skillful means to express the compassionate spirit of the Buddha, i.e. Buddhism has to be modernized in every era.” Furthermore, it is “unveiling the teachings of the past buddhas and eminent monastics to society in a way that modern people are familiar and comfortable with.”

In this respect, the modernization of Buddhism can be said to use modern means to “transform modernity.”

Although modernization is a fundamental principle demonstrated by the Buddha, and by which Buddhism was propagated during all eras, the teaching of the Dharma nonetheless developed shortcomings. These include: inflexibility and stagnation due to political oppression, mundane interests, and human sloth. In order to remedy such shortcomings, modernization cannot be delayed for a single moment. Some conservative Buddhists are unable to correctly assess the situation, and often oppose modern methods of Dharma propagation by referencing scriptures and traditional rules of conduct. In this respect, Theravāda Buddhism is particularly conservative. Venerable Master Hsing Yun believes that the modernization of Buddhism is inevitable, and has designated it as a direction for Fo Guang Shan. He has also provided many constructive ideas on the subject: “Modernized Buddhism is a religion targeted at genuinely solving the problems of life, and is founded upon humanism. It is not an unrealistic fantasy, nor is it empty talk.”

Modernized Buddhism focuses on “this time, this place, and this person,” and “not only progresses with the times, but is foremost in advancing Buddhism in modern minds.” It can neither afford to be conservative nor can it stick to formality. Modernized Buddhism stresses ethics over miracles—applying Buddhist ethics to modern life.

Contemporary Buddhism should be founded on the fundamentals of: emphasizing liberation during life, service over prayers, careers over monastic retirement, society over the individual, Dharma joy over sensual pleasure, and national affairs over personal affairs. The Dharma should be modernized in terms of its language, ensuring that the sūtras are available in commonly understood languages, including availability.
in digital formats. Buddhists should master multiple languages, including English, to broadly spread the Dharma across the world. The propagation of Buddhism should employ modern technology, using modern equipment such as telephones, televisions, radio, facsimile machines, computers, speakers, and cameras to expound the sūtras and transmit information. Dharma propagation should use many means of communication, for example: organizing symposiums, seminars, exchanges, and reports. Spiritual practice should be modernized and applicable to daily life in order to serve society and give happiness to sentient beings. Monasteries should be modernized to become campuses complete with libraries, briefing rooms, audio-visual centers, conference rooms, lecture halls, etc.—playing the role of a school that transmits the Dharma, and develops techniques for mental wellbeing and Buddhist culture. Buddhist news and information agencies, internet enquiry centers, radio stations, television stations, exchanges between IT personnel, and monastery tours, should all be established. Furthermore, the tripitaka should be recompiled, Buddhist monasteries of the eight schools reconstructed, Buddhist publications made widely available, and IT more strongly utilized, “so that the Dharma may travel from the monasteries in the mountains and forests to society, to schools, to sūtra repositories, to Dharma halls, to bookstores, from monastics to lay people, and from printing to digital media.”

Not only did Venerable Master Hsing Yun make these suggestions in Buddhist circles, he also implemented them. He founded the Fo Guang Shan Tsung-Lin University, Fo Guang University, University of the West, a television station for propagating the Dharma, compiled and published the Fo Guang Buddhist Canon, Fo Guang Dictionary of Buddhism, sūtras, and biographies of eminent monks written in vernacular prose. Furthermore, he has organized many academic seminars on Buddhism. At the core of all these activities is the ideal of modernizing Buddhism.

The modernization of Buddhism should go beyond simply using modern technology to adapt to today’s audience. It should expound the Dharma to provide solutions for modern social issues and mental health problems. Venerable Master Hsing Yun astutely observes the contemporary human mentality, and his critique of its pathology is very deep, as we can see from his talk “All Kinds of Cultivation Methods from the Perspective of Various Buddhist Schools and Sects.”

Waves of Western civilization swept through the entire world
in the twentieth century. The application of machinery has accelerated the pace of people’s lives, increased the production of material objects, and stimulated sensual desires. In tandem with the operation of these machines, people are constantly striving to make ends meet, yet forgetting to take the time for self-reflection. The intense competition in life, increasing alienation, and over-indulgence has caused people’s spirits to become numb, and thus the words “empty” and “disappointed” best describe this period.217

Venerable Master Hsing Yun further critiques humankind’s endless plundering of the earth’s resources, causing ecological destruction and the depletion of energy reserves. The corruption of human value systems and worldviews has led to political trickery, internal strife, war, monopolistic practices, wealth disparities, religious conflict and discrimination, the release of toxic gases, noise pollution, fear and violence, and threats of a nuclear war. The worst is the contaminating spirit of business—everyone wants a fortune, and is hungry for success. For the sake of money, people are unscrupulous and abandon ethics. Consequently, practices such as counterfeiting, smuggling, tax evasion, misappropriation of trademarks, breaking of agreements, absconding, issuing bad checks, bribery, and corruption have all became commonplace. Society as a whole is pervaded by a villainous mentality of bullying and deception. In addition, those who are truly wealthy do not know how to use their money—they either keep mistresses, which then causes many family problems and negatively affects the youth, or they wine and dine away a small fortune annually. Society is full of corruption, fulfilling the saying: “More money, sex, and violence, but yet less decorum, virtues, and Dharma friends.”218, 219 There are also the issues of underpaid workers, gender pay inequality, occupational diseases, people being seen as replaceable as parts of a machine, spiritual apathy, and physical laziness—all of these severely damage our bodies and minds.

In response to various social problems and mental illnesses, Venerable Master Hsing Yun proposes the following solutions based on the Dharma:

1. Promote mutual respect between people and strive for world peace by using the Dharma’s notion of equality to remedy human inequality.
2. Stop indiscriminate killing, protect animals, and strengthen human ethics by
using the Dharma’s notion of humanism to remedy the lack of concern for life.

3. Cause the entire human race to realize that “the earth is our home”\(^{220}\) and that they should treasure affinities, material objects, and life by using the Dharma’s notion of the nondual nature of direct and conditional retribution as a remedy for environmental destruction and ecosystem degradation.

4. Use the principles of balance and harmonization to handle matters and raise the quality of life by using the Dharma’s notion of dependent origination to remedy the problem of irrationally handling affairs.

5. Lead people to have self-awareness and adhere to ethical standards by using the Dharma’s notion of cause and effect to remedy violations of the law and the collapse of ethics.

6. Free people from the entanglement of afflictions and to maintain a blissful, lively, natural, and pure mental state by using the Chan method of taming the mind to remedy the human mind’s mental anxiety, loneliness, and bewilderment.

Nurture a younger generation with healthy bodies and minds, ethics, compassion, and love for society and country. Remedy the problems through education and replace criticism with encouragement, chidings with loving kindness, indulgence with concern, and estrangement with partnership. As Venerable Master Hsing Yun excellently summarizes in *The Modernization of Buddhism*:\(^{221}\)

The purpose of what we term ‘the modernization of Buddhism’ is to provide the spirit of Buddhist compassion and tolerance as a reference point for society’s consideration, in the hope that society may attain a state of beauty and benevolence by following the Buddhist principles of equality, dependent origination, cause and effect, etc. If society is able to enrich its depth and quality, and enhance its spirituality with the guidance of the Dharma, then there is a reason for Buddhism’s existence within this era. The true aims of Buddhism embarking on its path to modernization is society’s advancement and modernization!\(^{222}\)
8. A Harmonious Humanistic Buddhism

Venerable Master Hsing Yun claims to be “born with a harmonious personality,” harmonious referring to tolerance, forgiveness, peaceful interdependence, unity, cooperativeness, and able to coexistence. Both harmony and interdependence are important elements of the traditional spirit of Chinese Buddhism, and in today’s society, there appears to be a need for harmony and movement towards integration. The emphasis on harmony is a unique characteristic of Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s Humanistic Buddhism, and it encompasses the various Buddhist schools and sects both in China and abroad, traditional and modern, monastic and lay, Buddhist and worldly knowledge, Buddhism and other religions, different ethnicities, beliefs and countries, principle and phenomena, self and others, life and the Dharma, engagement and transcendence, and eventually the accomplishment of the “integration of all things in the Dharma realm.”

In his lecture ‘Fundamental Ideas of Humanistic Buddhism,’ Venerable Master Hsing Yun declares that this is “an era of interdependence in the human realm,” and advocates that Humanistic Buddhism “has to integrate and bring together the various strands of Buddhism—from the earliest that existed during the Buddha’s time to that of the modern day.” We find in *Fo Guang Essential Guides to Buddhism: Buddha’s Light Philosophy:* These are all practices and concepts of harmony within the Dharma realm. The BLIA and Fo Guang Shan promote equality between men and women, rich and poor, all vocational levels, and all ethnic groups. We also work to promote harmony among different religions, different schools of Buddhism, traditional and modern thought, and monastics and lay disciples. As we try to apply Buddhism in everyday life, we are making a connection among secular knowledge and Buddhism. Through these ideas and practices we understand that all Dharma realms are one. The concept that all Dharma realms are one is the spirit of Buddha’s Light. Followers of the Mahayana and Theravada schools need to be unified with the sutric and the tantric, self and others, theory and practice. There should also be harmony among all ethnic groups. Therefore, the BLIA wants to spread joy worldwide, enabling
all people to be in complete harmony, regardless of ethnicity or nationality. By understanding that there are differences in similarities and similarities in differences, people will be able to live with one another in a spirit of peace and cooperation.229

This concept of harmony is based on the philosophy of the Mahāyāna’s “middle way,”230 and the Huayan School’s “integration of all things in the Dharma realm.”231 In response to the current trend of the world, we should extend our concern beyond Buddhism to the entire world, the whole of humankind, and even the entire Dharma realm, and demonstrate an all-embracing attitude, farsightedness, and spirit of integration only possible in Buddhism. This is not only what is necessary for the advancement of Buddhism but also that of humankind as a whole.

As far as the development of Humanistic Buddhism is concerned, harmony as advocated by Venerable Master Hsing Yun broadly addresses the following three major issues. The first issue is harmony between the various schools and sects of Buddhism. Mahāyāna and Theravāda, exoteric and esoteric, are all valuable in the eyes of Venerable Master Hsing Yun. They each address varying needs and capabilities, and none can be considered more orthodox or superior, just like a hundred blossoms having different fragrances and colors. “There are eighty-four thousand Buddhist teachings and each one leads us along the path towards Buddhahood. Therefore, we cannot claim that one is ultimate while the other is not.”232, 233 There is nothing wrong with focusing on and practicing in depth just a single school or practice, but there should not be disputes among schools. They should respect one another, integrate the Dharma, and promote Buddhism as a whole. In its early days, Fo Guang Shan claimed not to belong to any particular school and promoted all the eight schools of Buddhism simultaneously. Later, after its lineage was transmitted from the Linji school, it continued to harmonize the various schools. True to what Buddhist historian Lan Jifu says, Venerable Master Hsing Yun is primarily rooted in the Chan School but not restrained by it. He integrates the different schools and especially leans towards an integration of Chan and Pure Land, citing that their joint practice agrees very much with the philosophy of Humanistic Buddhism. Although he does not greatly promote esoteric practices, he is not averse to these practices, and advocates harmony between the exoteric and the esoteric. He organized the World Sūtric and Tantric Buddhist Conference and the Chan, Pure Land, and Tantric Ceremony, while
also sending selected disciples to learn Tibetan Vajrayāna Buddhism. His philosophy of Buddhism broadly integrates and unites early Buddhism, Theravāda tradition, the Chan, Tiantai, Huayan, and Pure Land schools, in addition to incorporating Buddhist academic research and Confucian and Daoist teachings. We can truly say it integrates the various schools both within and outside Buddhism.

The second issue is harmony between monastics and the laity. For a long time, it was monks who ran Buddhist institutions. Not only were monastics superior to the laity, the status of nuns was comparatively lower than monks, and nuns do not even exist in Theravāda Buddhism. In the Buddhist revival since the near-modern period, the Buddhist laity have significantly contributed to the growth of the lay movement, resulting in the establishments of lay associations across the world, and the growth in numbers of lay Dharma teachers. The differences between monastics and the laity has become a major issue in many Buddhist circles, with some emphasizing the superiority of monastics over the laity, while others argue that “the laity who takes refuge in only two gems” and do not respect monastics. In addressing this issue, Venerable Master Hsing Yun advocates harmony between monastics and the laity—affirming the laity’s important function in Dharma propagation, emphasizing lay Buddhism, establishing the lay BLIA, and founding the system for lay Dharma lecturers and teachers to encourage qualified people to teach. Such innovation met with objection from some Buddhist circles. Some thought that this would rob monastics of power over the religion and create chaos. However, Venerable Master Hsing Yun believes that:

In the past, Buddhism’s heavy reliance on monastics to propagate the Dharma certainly had its own temporal factors, but Buddhism today has spread throughout the world, and so it is definitely insufficient to depend on the efforts of a small handful of monastics. Furthermore, with the increased universality of education, there are increasing numbers of talented and knowledgeable lay people. Why then should we not open our minds, be mutually respectful, and unite under the leadership of the Buddha to mobilize Humanistic Buddhism?
In line with the Dharma’s principle of equality, and in keeping with the contemporary trend of gender equality, Venerable Master Hsing Yun pays great attention to raising the status of women in Buddhism. To this end, his lecture *A Buddhist Perspective of Women* explained the philosophy of gender equality in the Dharma, he has published *Stories of Women in Buddhism* to detail the remarkable achievements of outstanding women in Buddhism. He has nurtured many female disciples, and given them free rein in shouldering the great responsibility of Dharma propagation. This demonstrates the significant role of female disciples, and that their status is equal to that of men in Fo Guang Shan.

The third issue is harmony between tradition and modernity. Although promoting Humanistic Buddhism implies modernization in response to the times and devotees’ capabilities, it does not negate Buddhist tradition. Instead, it seeks to reform the corruption and ills that arose from a feudal society, so as to better transmit and propagate the excellent traditions of Buddhism. What Venerable Master Hsing Yun teaches as part of Humanistic Buddhism is fundamentally the essence of traditional Buddhism. Instead of calling it innovation, we can say it is primarily a continuation of traditional Dharma. *Fo Guang Essential Guides to Buddhism: Buddha’s Light Philosophy* clearly states: “In the development of Fo Guang Shan, and in the establishment of the BLIA, our main purpose has been to apply traditional Buddhism to modern life.” In it, Venerable Master Hsing Yun also admits that: “In actual fact, I am rather conservative and attached to tradition.” Deep down, Venerable Master Hsing Yun is indeed a Chan monastic who grew up in a traditional Chan monastery. He used to engage in the traditional practices of a monastic—retreats, meditation, prostrating to the Buddha, chanting the Buddha’s name, copying out scriptures with his own blood, isolating himself, takings vows of silence, not eating after noon, ascetic practices, monastic duties—and indeed gained from them, “experiencing eternity in a moment” and “a state of non-self and being without body and mind.” During an Amitābha chanting retreat, he attained states of “the disappearance of body and mind, and the great expanse of the earth,” “mindfulness amidst non-mindfulness,” “no self and no others,” and even “the merger of time, space, and all things into a singular emptiness.” Such deep experiences later became a great source of confidence, wisdom, and meditative concentration for him. “Buddha’s Light Samadhi Cultivation Method” he compiled for BLIA members includes paying homage and making vows, recitation, meditation and contemplation, practices, etc.
It is very much traditional, a pure Mahāyāna practice centered on the integration of the Chan and Pure Land schools. He also gave many lectures on Chan practice and pedagogy, demonstrating a solid foundation in the Chan teachings. In terms of Buddhist etiquette, he sticks closely to the traditions of Chinese Buddhism, believing that “the monastic dress code, vegetarianism, and even etiquette of Chinese Buddhism must not be changed.” In this respect, he is more conservative than Taixu. However, he is also quite contemporary, unattached to traditional ways of practice or pursuing the old paths of meditation, chanting the name of the Buddha, or asceticism to its end. He only applies the religious experience that could be obtained in an Amitābha chanting retreat to daily life and extols the practice of the bodhisattva path in daily work. Neither does Venerable Master Hsing Yun teach his disciples to walk the old paths of ascetic practice, maintaining vows of silence, not eating after noon, engaging in retreats, etc. Teaching by example, he is like a modern-day Maitreya who exemplifies the fusion of tradition and modernity.

Besides integrating the various schools of Buddhism, and the fourfold assembly of monastics, laity, tradition and modernity, Venerable Master Hsing Yun also respects other religions and folk beliefs with an open mind, believing that “superstition (referring to belief in God or deities and spirits) is better than having no belief; orthodox beliefs are better than superstition.” He also promotes learning from the strengths of other religions, and expressed gratitude for the example Christianity provided for Buddhism with the founding of hospitals, schools, prison chaplaincy, and television evangelism. When it comes to politics, Venerable Master Hsing Yun does not lean towards any party, seeing all of them as equal and broadly creating affinities with them. He works with them towards achieving cross-strait harmony. He proposes ideals and principles such as living together in coexistence, equality and peace, pointing out that “harmony does not mean you are important and I am not, you have more while I have less, and it is certainly does not mean you can have all, while I keep nothing, or you are good while I am bad.” With the ideal of equality, an all-encompassing embrace, an attitude of respecting differences, and the emotion of compassion, we should abandon biased views, prevent fighting, robbery, murder, destruction, and deviancy—so as to achieve great harmony for the whole of humankind, and build a peaceful and happy Pure Land on Earth.
9. Enterprization, Systematization, Popularization, and Internationalization of Humanistic Buddhism

The Humanistic Buddhism advocated by Venerable Master Hsing Yun emphasizes enterprise, etiquette, art and literature, as well as systemization, popularization, internationalization, and standardization.

Emphasizing enterprise is one of the major strategies proposed by Venerable Master Hsing Yun to revitalize Buddhism. He points out that Buddhism has historically paid considerable attention to enterprise, only later coming to focus on spiritual practice and learning. This is one of the reasons for Buddhism’s decline. The practice of Humanistic Buddhism should:

1. Inherit the tradition of ancient Buddhism and emulate the contemporary practice of Catholicism, Christianity, and Japanese Buddhism in undertaking enterprises, thereby fulfilling the objectives of engagement, universal mercy, and succor.
2. Establish Buddhist cultural enterprises to promote the traditions of compiling, translating, printing scriptures, sculpting, authorship, painting, art, and technology.
3. Revitalize Buddhist educational enterprises, going beyond establishing Buddhist colleges aimed at nurturing monastic talents to setting up free elementary, secondary, Sunday schools, universities, summer camps, and technical courses so as to fully realize the multiple functions of education.
4. Actively develop enterprises in social philanthropy, compassionately aiding sentient beings by relieving hunger, poverty, providing medical services, caring for the aged and children, and building public cemeteries.
5. Vigorously develop Buddhist enterprises in social welfare, seeking to benefit the public by promoting the excellent traditions practiced by the virtuous ones of the past. For example, planting trees and undertaking reforestation, digging wells and making waterways, building bridges and paving roads, operating mills, building toilets, helping travellers, and providing emergency relief.
6. Run Buddhist economic enterprises, and build strong economic foundations for Dharma propagation. Modernized Buddhist enterprises should include
commercial entities like factories, farms, insurance, and banks. Buddhist monasteries can encourage the laity to establish these enterprises and foster cooperation between monastics and the laity in developing Buddhist economics.  

Venerable Master Hsing Yun is a genius at managing different types of Buddhist enterprises. He has successfully published the *Universal Gate, Awakening the World*, and *Merit Times*, compiled and published the *Fo Guang Buddhist Canon, Fo Guang Dictionary of Buddhism, A Treasury of Chinese Buddhist Classics, and Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Electronic Texts*, established the Fo Guang Shan Foundation for Buddhist Culture & Education, Buddha’s Light Publications, Buddha’s Light Bookstore, Fo Guang Shan Audio Visual Center (predecessor of Beautiful Life Television, BLTV -Ed.), Buddhist Artifacts Gallery (predecessor of Fo Guang Shan Museum of Treasures -Ed.), FGS Public Library, and Fo Guang Yuan Art Gallery. He further founded more than ten Buddhist colleges including the Fo Guang Shan Tsung-Lin University, Fo Guang Shan Chinese Buddhism Academy, and English and Japanese Buddhist colleges, educational institutes such as Pu-Men Senior High School, Nanhua University, Fo Guang University, over ten kindergartens like Pu-Men Kindergarten, Urban Buddhist Colleges to develop devotees’ education, the Srimala Institute to train women, and organizations such as the Fo Guang Shan Compassion Foundation, Fo Guang Clinic, Cloud and Water Mobile Clinic, Emergency Relief Association, community service team, Avalokiteśvara Life Protection Association, Organ Donation Association, and Office of Societal Education to develop compassionate relief. Furthermore, he set up the Da Ci Children’s Home to take care of children, the Lanyang Ren Ai Senior Citizens’ Home, Fo Guang Senior Citizens’ Home, and Senior Citizens’ Apartments of Kaohsiung City to take care of the aged, and a Buddhist public cemetery named Longevity Memorial Park to house the ashes of the deceased. With these, he has provided a successful model for developing various Buddhist enterprises.  

Venerable Master Hsing Yun also feels that popularization is an essential characteristic of Humanistic Buddhism, emphasizing that “the Dharma is found in the people,” and “when separate from the people, there is no Dharma.” Considering that the people are its foundation, popularization is innately part of the spirit of the Buddha’s teaching. In
fact, the Saṅgha gem (the third part of the Triple Gem) has the connotation of the public being a great assembly. Humanistic Buddhism must consider ideas from society’s point of view—considering the public’s needs, becoming intimate with these needs, regarding the people as self and self as the people, and otherwise integrate individual egos into the public. In terms of daily activity, one must serve the public and have a collectivist spirit, rather than remain in an ivory tower or become an eccentric holding extreme views. Instead, individuals should become an intimate part of the people as a whole and serve both Buddhism and the public, to “see the peoples’ shadows with one’s eyes, hear the peoples’ voices with one’s ears, consider the peoples’ merits and achievements with one’s mind, be aware of the peoples’ grace in one’s body, and realize that just as the people benefited me, I should benefit the people.”

Marketing materials, Dharma teachings, chanting, and songs should all be popularized, helping the Dharma travel from the monasteries into society, so that people can benefit from the Dharma. One should serve the public by making a vow to be a bodhisattva who vows to live a life of service.

The phrases “collaborative effort” and “achievements belong to the majority” are regarded as part of Fo Guang Shan’s customs and traditions. Venerable Master Hsing Yun himself has a collectivist character, as he says in *Hundred Sayings: The Philosophy of Being Second*:

“In the beginning, I named myself ‘Hsing Yun’ (lit. Cloud of Stars) only to encourage myself to be a little star among a cloud of stars, using my little bit of light, together with the brilliance of other stars, to illuminate the universe.”

He believes that Dharma propagation should turn from being focused on individuals towards groups, so as to better utilize the strengths found in collectives. Furthermore, many Buddhist groups of various sizes should be established, and collective Dharma services and activities should be promoted. Venerable Master Hsing Yun was behind the organizing of centers for the elderly, technical training, counselling centers, Buddhist book exchanges and reading clubs, community Dharma centers, joint meetings for Mainland Chinese and Taiwanese devotees, community service centers, family Dharma services, study tours, pilgrimages, Sunday schools for children, Buddhist volunteer groups, family-based Buddhist discussions, and eight precepts retreats. By organizing many types of communal activities, Venerable Master Hsing Yun hopes the scope of collective Dharma services can be expanded.

Venerable Master Hsing Yun particularly emphasizes that a robust organizational
system is critical to the implementation of Humanistic Buddhism. The Buddhist monastic community has established a system of stringent precepts and monastic rules, but problems and shortcomings are present. For example, laxness in maintaining the precepts and the lack of discipline were the crux of Buddhism’s decline. To revitalize Buddhism, we must first start with a robust system, aspects like economics, human resources, monasteries, ordination, and teaching the Dharma should all have their own established processes and systems. In order to rectify long existing problems such as laxity in maintaining the precepts, forming individual lineages through ordination, and the indiscriminate acceptance of disciples, the Fo Guang Shan monastic community under the leadership of Venerable Master Hsing Yun has designed a series of processes and systems based on the principles of monastic rules as set down by the Buddha and the Six Reverent Points of Harmony. In order to create a guide for action by “collaborative effort, systemic leadership, never engaging in non-Buddhist enterprises, and relying on nothing other than the Dharma,” twenty-six twelve rules have been instituted. These are namely:

1. Do not miss shaving the head at the appropriate time.
2. Do not stay overnight in the house of a layperson.
3. Do not lend or borrow money from each other.
4. Do not corrupt the monastic order.
5. Do not accept your own disciples.
6. Do not accumulate money for yourself.
7. Do not establish your own temples.
8. Do not keep your own devotees.
9. Do not accept donations for yourself.
10. Do not solicit donations for yourself.
11. Do not deal in personal property.
12. Do not make your own food or drink alone.

The Fo Guang Shan Board of Directors have adopted modern management methods, overseeing five councils (Elder Council, Supervisory Council, Culture and Art Council, Education Council, Charity Council) and ten foundations and committees (Fo Guang Shan Tripiṭaka Board and others). It is a multi-tiered management structure that is a complete
system in itself. Monastic disciples are assessed and promoted to various ranks. BLIA has a tight organizational system that consists of the General Conference, Board of Directors, Secretary General, Chief Treasurer, various committees, Legal Affairs Officer, and other offices. As Fu Chi-ying writes in *Handing Down the Light: The Biography of Venerable Master Hsing Yun*, the establishment of these systems “has not only the purpose of eradicating the old and bringing new changes to Chinese Buddhism, but is also a valuable reference for today’s business decision makers.”

Venerable Master Hsing Yun also attaches great importance to, and is a master of, promoting the Dharma through literature and art. Since his youth, he has held the ideal that “Buddhism needs literature and art.” In Taiwan, he organized a choir and a Dharma promotion team. He has written the novels *The Biography of Śākyamuni Buddha* and *National Master Yulin*. His integration of Buddhism and art also includes the Fo Guang Shan temple architecture that emphasizes magnificence and beauty, writing song lyrics, and establishing nine Fo Guang Yuan Art Galleries. “Beautifying the world with art” is regarded as an integral part of building a Fo Guang Pure Land. Art is an important characteristic of Humanistic Buddhism.

The internationalization of Buddhism is another ideal that Venerable Master Hsing Yun has aspired to since his youth. He established an international department in order to nurture global talent. After years of hard work, he has finally disseminated Buddhism from Taiwan to the world, establishing BLIA as an international organization, holding many international Buddhist conferences, developing exchanges and cooperating between Buddhists internationally, and supporting those interested in studying the internationalization of Buddhism. He has urged BLIA members to:

> We should develop an open-minded international view, without distinctions based on geography, ethnicity, nationality, or religion. Throughout the world, through culture and education, BLIA members should make every effort to benefit all sentient beings.

The Humanistic Buddhism Venerable Master Hsing Yun advocates also emphasizes etiquette and standardization. The *Fo Guang Essential Guides to Buddhism: Buddha’s Light Philosophy* tells us that:
Humanistic Buddhism sees rites of passage as particularly important, so all Fo Guang Shan branch temples hold ceremonies for the coming of age, Buddhist marriage, refuge-taking, death, and other practices for their devotees. This is done in the hope that these Buddhist rites of passage can fulfill the aim of making the Dharma relevant to life and life relevant to the Dharma.275

Venerable Master Hsing Yun proposes that the systems, spiritual practices, and rites of passage in Buddhism should move in the direction of standardization. This will avoid disagreement among devotees, which could lead to wrong views and cults to infiltrate the religion. He also believes that the morning and evening chanting, rites of passage, major ceremonies, Buddhist statues, printed and distributed sūtras, appellations, and the criteria for the various monastic and lay ranks should all be standardized.

10. The Contributions of Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s Thoughts on Humanistic Buddhism

The essence of Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s thoughts on Humanistic Buddhism can be summarized as follows:

1. To remedy Chinese Buddhism’s biases towards transcendence (retreating into mountains and forests and emphasis on death and funerary services) and to adapt to a modern industrial, commercial, and technological society, we should revitalize the Buddha’s intent through Humanistic Buddhism. We need to promote the excellent tradition of Chinese Buddhism. We should also firmly ground ourselves to the human realm and take humans as the basis of our consideration, so as to emphasize the abundance and happiness of human life and assist in the purification of human minds. From there we can aspire to build a humanistic Pure Land.

2. To make every effort to bring the Dharma down-to-earth, to bring it into everyday life. To practice the Buddha’s teachings and maintain right views in daily life, so as to guide and enlighten and bring joy to our everyday living. To find solutions to defilements and afflictions with a joyous and optimistic attitude so that all
humans can enjoy affinity and spread happiness throughout the human world.

3. To vigorously enter into the human world by going deep into society. This is done applying a transcendental spirit while working toward worldly achievements. In addition, to participate in social institutions that work to care for society propagate the Dharma for the benefit of all sentient beings.

4. To make act quickly to apply modern methods to resolve problems of modern society. To purify and cultivate society through practice and with the Buddha’s teachings and right views.

5. To carry forward the spirit of harmonizing all schools of Buddhism, monastics and lay devotees, the traditional and the modern, Buddhist and worldly knowledge, Buddhism and other religions, even people of different races, nations, and religions.

6. To pay attention to achievements in culture and education, economics, charity and welfare; to establish sound working systems and perfect etiquette; to promote literature and the arts; to work toward human progress by advancing Humanistic Buddhism globally with a forward-looking international mindset and an enterprising spirit. To aspire for world peace and to establish a Pure Land in the human world.

In short, to keep up with the trends of this epoch and those of the future, with a creative and flexible application of Dharma wisdom and the most effective methods of propagating the Dharma in order to promote virtue to purify the human world—these are the specific characteristics of Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s Humanistic Buddhism.

Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s thoughts on Humanistic Buddhism are broad and rich. Despite their deeply profound content, they are expressed in simple and easy-to-understand language. They are the culmination of his many decades of success in practicing Humanistic Buddhism, his deep realizations of the Dharma, his sober reflections on current affairs and the history of Buddhism, and his keen perception and deep observation of people’s minds in modern society. His Humanistic Buddhism is not a hollow theory built only in the abstract. As Venerable Master Hsing Yun says: “We must use our spirit to feel, and our practice to verify, in order to obtain an understanding of its meaning.”

It is only through deep reflection on the development of Humanistic
Buddhism in the last hundred years, the history and present situation of Buddhism, and the actual experience gained from the practice of Humanistic Buddhism, that one can fully comprehend Venerable Master Hsing Yun and understand the implications and purpose of the Humanistic Buddhism he proposes. I am sorry to say I lack the wisdom, and do not qualify to make any comments on Venerable Master Hsing Yun. My above exposition is based solely on my understanding, and is only an attempt to delineate the outline of his philosophy of Humanistic Buddhism—it is far from capturing the full extent of the his thought.

Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s system of Humanistic Buddhism has inherited, assimilated, and developed from the theories proposed by others such as Yin Shun and Taixu. In particular, he inherited Taixu’s courage for revolution, international perspective, and drive for integration. In contrast, compared to the masters mentioned above, Venerable Master Hsing Yun is more thorough in his criticism and efforts to eradicate traditional flaws. He is more specific, more lively, and richer in terms of his teachings on the application of Buddhism to daily life. He is more creative and modern in regard to enterprises, systems, etiquette, literature, and the arts. What is even more valuable is that, in the hands of Venerable Master Hsing Yun, Humanistic Buddhism is not only a theoretical construct, but has also been realized in the world. With great and outstanding effort, Humanistic Buddhism has become a living reality founded in Taiwan and promoted throughout the world. Its vibrancy and vitality has reinvigorated the Buddha’s teachings and popularized Chinese culture everywhere.

Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s contributions towards the promotion of Humanistic Buddhism under his leadership are summarized in the *Fo Guang Shan 30th Anniversary Special Edition*:

1. Increase in the global Buddhist population.
2. Increasing the interest of young people in learning Buddhism.
3. Lay devotees are propagating the Dharma.
4. The media is displaying respect towards Buddhism.
5. Widespread circulation of Buddhist artifacts.
6. Buddhist chanting is a valued practice.
7. BLIA is flourishing as an organization.
8. Educational institutions recognize Buddhism.
9. Distinguished people are practicing Buddhism.
10. People in authority have taken refuge in the Triple Gem.
11. Excellent results have been returned from the World Buddhist Examination.
12. International Dharma propagation is occurring.

These are facts for all to see, but looking from a long-term and theoretical perspective, Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s contributions to Humanistic Buddhism extend beyond these twelve points.

A close colleague of mine, Deng Zimei, referred to Humanistic Buddhism as “the most treasured crystal of wisdom in twentieth century Chinese Buddhism.” Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s philosophy of Humanistic Buddhism can be regarded as “the crystal of crystals.” Looking at its philosophical connotations, the results of its application, and the trend of development—this philosophy has significant implications for the future of the whole of Buddhism and even that of humankind.

Late world-renowned historian Dr. Arnold Joseph Toynbee once predicted that religion will be the source of vitality for society in the future. Such a religion has to satisfy the human spirit of science and philosophy, must save both the East and West from their conundrums and crises, should give people the ability to discern and overcome the power of evil (with greed and desire at the forefront) that severely threatens human survival, and is required to benefit all humankind. Dr. Toynbee felt that Mahāyāna Buddhism was the most qualified to shoulder this immense responsibility, but it first had to undergo reforms. This viewpoint has garnered widespread agreement from learned people both in the East and West.

A survey of existing human spiritual achievements reveals that Mahāyāna Buddhism, with its core focus of solving the ultimate (both eternal and universal) human concern, has the ability to oversee the entire Dharma realm from strategic heights. It contains profound wisdom that surpasses both science and philosophy, and is capable of upholding the good in human culture and guiding the development of civilization. It has a noble spirit of compassionate universal mercy and succor, a broad vision of non-dual interdependence, a prescription that can cure the ills of society and individual minds by striking their roots, and deep-seated characteristics of rationality and humanism. Without having the shortcomings and biases of other religions, science, and philosophy, it is
most suited to awakening humankind’s civilized consciousness, guiding us to reflect on present issues, orient toward a proper course, reconcile conflicts, resolve crises, work out difficulties, promote world peace, and integrate environmental protection and the natural and social sciences. It is indeed the most qualified to be a nexus of faith, which can unite all of humanity. However, Buddhism as currently practiced is flawed. It is rigid and in a degraded state from a prolonged period of development in feudal societies. As a result, it is currently unable to shoulder such an immense responsibility. It has to be revitalized in keeping with the times, have its flaws eradicated, return to the Buddha’s teachings, and reignite its vitality. For over a hundred years, there had been many eminent monastics who have passionately propagated the Dharma and had an intense historically-inspired sense of purpose, all of whom have worked towards this one goal of initiating a Buddhist revival. Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s Humanistic Buddhism can be considered the mature fruit of this movement, and provides a successful model for the revival of Mahāyāna Buddhism. It has become a paradigm often emulated by Buddhists inside and outside China, and even by other religions. It will certainly play a further role in reviving Buddhism in the twenty-first century. It provides humankind with an ultimate refuge, capable of building one’s life upon, and will very possibly further extend throughout the world—leading the development of human civilization and the realization of a human Pure Land. As Venerable Master Hsing Yun says: “Humanistic Buddhism is a guiding light for humankind’s future.”

After several years of in-depth observation and many interviews, I now know that the only one capable of shouldering this great task (author’s note: refers to the campaign to unite the two vehicles and ten schools of Buddhism) delegated by heaven, and initiate a renewal of Buddhism in the next five hundred years can only be Venerable Master Hsing Yun, the founder of the Fo Guang Shan lineage.

This is indeed not an overstatement. Humanistic Buddhism as advocated by Venerable Master Hsing Yun may well be the pioneering movement for a new phase of development for Buddhism in the next five hundred years. It has led to the reappearance
of the Age of Right Dharma, and we see a glimpse of the return to brilliance of Right Dharma from Fo Guang Shan’s achievements to date.

It has to be acknowledged that the Dharma is extremely broad and profound, containing countless skillful means. The religious needs of sentient beings must also necessarily be diverse, but the unification of such diverse beliefs into a “single body” of Humanistic Buddhism is probably an inevitable trend. Fo Guang Shan’s Humanistic Buddhism will be even more qualified to shoulder the sacred responsibility of providing all humankind with a foundation to build their lives upon if it further deepens its theoretical foundations, integrates the content of other schools, continually improves upon its practice of meditative wisdom, and becomes more creative in its Dharma propagation. Venerable Master Hsing Yun is still healthy and spirited, and with the rapid development of the many disciples he is nurturing, there will certainly be no lack of successors. I trust his Humanistic Buddhism will keep abreast of the times in a more fulfilling and mature manner, so that Righteous Dharma will reside within and the Buddha’s Light shine worldwide.

Notes

1 《佛陀的智慧》-Ed.
2 《佛教生死學》-Ed.
3 《佛教禪學與東方文明》-Ed.
4 《佛法在世間》-Ed.
5 《本事經》-Ed.
6 《瑜伽師地論》-Ed.
7 「能化處無量眾生，令苦寂滅，故名大師；又為摧滅邪穢外道，出現世間，故名大師。」-Ed.
8 《以二十年的時間讀一個人的感想》in Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s Lecture Series, Taipei: Fo Guang Cultural Enterprise, 1979, p. 783. In Chinese the text is: 「是中國佛教界第一位足以與其他宗教分庭抗禮，而為中國文化和中國佛教爭一口氣的人」-Ed.
9 「三百年來一人」-Ed.
10 《人間佛教的基本思想》-Ed.
11 《如何建設人間的佛教》-Ed.
12 《人間佛教》-Ed.
13 《佛教叢書》-Ed.
14 「人間佛教，不但早在我心裡，在我的行為裡，也時時在我的思想裡。」-Ed.
16 「教理革命」-Ed.
17 「學理革命」-Ed.
18 「三佛革命」-Ed.
19 《人生的佛學》-Ed.
20 上海倫德儲蓄會-Ed.
21 〈怎樣來建設人間佛教〉-Ed.
22 《人間》-Ed.
23 《人間佛教月刊》-Ed.
24 〈依聖言量來建設人間佛教〉-Ed.
25 《人生佛教》-Ed.
145
「人道佛教」-Ed.

「人間佛學」-Ed.

〈人生佛教的目的〉-Ed.

「舊行之佛教,厭離現實人生之心切,每重求後世之勝進或無生之寂滅」-Ed.

「鬼本神本」的佛教-Ed.

「人成即佛成」-Ed.

「以佛教的道理來改良社會,使人類進步,把世界改善」-Ed.

《我的佛教革命失敗史》-Ed.

「理論和啟導確有特長,如得實行和統率力充足的人,必可建構應現代中國之佛教的學理與制度」-Ed.

「必然遇到的不少問題,太虛大師只是提出了思路,未能解決」-Ed.


「鬼本神本」的佛教

「人道佛教」-Ed.

「人間佛學」-Ed.

〈人生佛教的目的〉-Ed.

「舊行之佛教,厭離現實人生之心切,每重求後世之勝進或無生之寂滅」-Ed.

「鬼本神本」的佛教-Ed.

「人成即佛成」-Ed.

「以佛教的道理來改良社會,使人類進步,把世界改善」-Ed.

《我的佛教革命失敗史》-Ed.

「理論和啟導確有特長,如得實行和統率力充足的人,必可建構應現代中國之佛教的學理與制度」-Ed.

「必然遇到的不少問題,太虛大師只是提出了思路,未能解決」-Ed.


「鬼本神本」的佛教

「人道佛教」-Ed.

「人間佛學」-Ed.

〈人生佛教的目的〉-Ed.

「舊行之佛教,厭離現實人生之心切,每重求後世之勝進或無生之寂滅」-Ed.

「鬼本神本」的佛教-Ed.

「人成即佛成」-Ed.

「以佛教的道理來改良社會,使人類進步,把世界改善」-Ed.

《我的佛教革命失敗史》-Ed.

「理論和啟導確有特長,如得實行和統率力充足的人,必可建構應現代中國之佛教的學理與制度」-Ed.

「必然遇到的不少問題,太虛大師只是提出了思路,未能解決」-Ed.


「鬼本神本」的佛教

「人道佛教」-Ed.

「人間佛學」-Ed.

〈人生佛教的目的〉-Ed.

「舊行之佛教,厭離現實人生之心切,每重求後世之勝進或無生之寂滅」-Ed.

「鬼本神本」的佛教-Ed.

「人成即佛成」-Ed.

「以佛教的道理來改良社會,使人類進步,把世界改善」-Ed.

《我的佛教革命失敗史》-Ed.

「理論和啟導確有特長,如得實行和統率力充足的人,必可建構應現代中國之佛教的學理與制度」-Ed.

「必然遇到的不少問題,太虛大師只是提出了思路,未能解決」-Ed.


「鬼本神本」的佛教

「人道佛教」-Ed.

「人間佛學」-Ed.

〈人生佛教的目的〉-Ed.

「舊行之佛教,厭離現實人生之心切,每重求後世之勝進或無生之寂滅」-Ed.

「鬼本神本」的佛教-Ed.

「人成即佛成」-Ed.

「以佛教的道理來改良社會,使人類進步,把世界改善」-Ed.

《我的佛教革命失敗史》-Ed.

「理論和啟導確有特長,如得實行和統率力充足的人,必可建構應現代中國之佛教的學理與制度」-Ed.

「必然遇到的不少問題,太虛大師只是提出了思路,未能解決」-Ed.


「鬼本神本」的佛教

「人道佛教」-Ed.

「人間佛學」-Ed.

〈人生佛教的目的〉-Ed.

「舊行之佛教,厭離現實人生之心切,每重求後世之勝進或無生之寂滅」-Ed.

「鬼本神本」的佛教-Ed.

「人成即佛成」-Ed.

「以佛教的道理來改良社會,使人類進步,把世界改善」-Ed.

《我的佛教革命失敗史》-Ed.

「理論和啟導確有特長,如得實行和統率力充足的人,必可建構應現代中國之佛教的學理與制度」-Ed.

「必然遇到的不少問題,太虛大師只是提出了思路,未能解決」-Ed.


「鬼本神本」的佛教

「人道佛教」-Ed.

「人間佛學」-Ed.

〈人生佛教的目的〉-Ed.

「舊行之佛教,厭離現實人生之心切,每重求後世之勝進或無生之寂滅」-Ed.

「鬼本神本」的佛教-Ed.

「人成即佛成」-Ed.

「以佛教的道理來改良社會,使人類進步,把世界改善」-Ed.

《我的佛教革命失敗史》-Ed.

「理論和啟導確有特長,如得實行和統率力充足的人,必可建構應現代中國之佛教的學理與制度」-Ed.

「必然遇到的不少問題,太虛大師只是提出了思路,未能解決」-Ed.


「鬼本神本」的佛教

「人道佛教」-Ed.

「人間佛學」-Ed.

〈人生佛教的目的〉-Ed.

「舊行之佛教,厭離現實人生之心切,每重求後世之勝進或無生之寂滅」-Ed.

「鬼本神本」的佛教-Ed.
歷經大時代的變遷，在一番身心洗煉之後，我逐漸釐清佛教未來的方向，立志效法六祖惠能大師和太虛大師所提倡的人間佛教思想，破除積弊已久的觀念及措施。

「人間佛教不是太虛大師的創說，而是佛陀的本懷。」

佛陀所傳的教法就是人間佛教，所有的佛教都是人間佛教。佛陀，道道地地是人間的佛陀；佛教，道道地地是人間佛教。

「佛陀所傳的教法就是人間佛教，所有的佛教都是人間佛教。佛陀，道道地地是人間的佛陀；佛教，道道地地是人間佛教。」

「人間佛教的思想是亙古今而不變，歷萬劫而常新的真理。」

「為人間佛教的依據聊作指標，並為人間佛教的傳承提供確切的證明。」

「作為我們奉行人間佛教的指導，說明釋迦牟尼佛是為人間佛教的創始者，六祖惠能及太虛大師等皆為人間佛教的提倡者。」

「一日不作，一日不食」
Studies on Humanistic Buddhism I: Foundational Thoughts


112 「佛教一旦離開了生活，便不是我們所需要的佛法，不是指導我們人生的方向和指標。佛教如果不能充實我們生活的內涵，那麼佛教的存在是沒有意義的。佛陀的教化，本來就是為了改善我們的人生，淨化我們的心靈，提升我們的生活，因此佛法是離不開生活的。」-Ed.


114 「用佛陀的開示教化作為改善我們人生的準繩，用佛法來淨化我們的思想，讓佛法作為我們生活的依據，使我們過得更有意義，更有價值。」-Ed.


116 「譬如佛陀告訴我們要發心，不僅布施要發心，信佛要發心，甚至吃飯睡覺也要發心。只要發心去做的事，效果奇佳：發心睡覺，這一覺一定睡得很甜蜜；發心吃飯，這一餐一定吃得很可口；發心走路，再崎嶇的路也視如平夷；發心做事，再困難的事，也甘之如怡。佛法中的發心，可以運用於家庭生活上，敦親睦鄰、孝敬親長、友愛手足，幫助朋友、都需要發心，愈發心，功德愈大，效果愈好。」-Ed.


118 『般若生活』-Ed.

119 「平常一樣窗前月，才有梅花便不同。」-Ed.

120 「如何用錢是一種甚深的智慧。而用錢最好使大眾都能獲得取之不盡，用之不竭的般若寶藏，才能使自己永遠享有用錢的快樂。」-Ed.


122 『飯要回家，身邊少帶錢，出門成雙對，出門有去處。』-Ed.


124 「好心一片，愛語三句，忍耐一時，慈悲全用，布施五錢，信用始終，感謝萬分，體諒一點，恭敬十成，方便不拘多少。」-Ed.


126 「每天過著既充實又幸福的忙碌生活」-Ed.

127 「珍言慰辛勞，飲食有妙味，家庭像樂園，凡事要報告。」-Ed.


129 「你大我小，你樂我苦，你對我錯，你有我無。」-Ed.


131 「在工作裡蘊含了慈悲喜捨，供養了佛心法味，給人信心，給人歡喜，給人方便，給人服務，把工作當成布施，工作就很快樂了。」-Ed.


133 「每天過著既充實又幸福的忙碌生活」-Ed.


135 「你大我小，你樂我苦，你對我錯，你有我無。」-Ed.


137 「以智化情，以慈作情，以法範情，以德導情」-Ed.
「真正的感情應該從奉獻中獲得。」 - Ed.

「真正的情愛不是擁有對方,而是一種生命的交流，更是一種對天下蒼生的無盡奉獻。」 - Ed.

「但願眾生得離苦,不為自己求安樂。」 - Ed.

「退一步想，海闊天空。」 - Ed.

「回頭是岸。」 - Ed.

「生活化的佛教，應該是不空不有、不冷不熱、不貪不拒、不執不捨的中道生活。」 - Ed.

「把人間弄得更加愁雲慘澹」 - Ed.

「看那些面無表情，心無熱力，當說不敢說，當笑不敢笑的修道者，如何為人間增添歡喜音樂，如何為社會帶來幸福和平？」 - Ed.

「諸佛成佛皆因歡喜，諸大菩薩普度眾生也因歡喜，轉輪聖王福佑全民也因歡喜。」 - Ed.

「歡喜是佛教真理的本質，歡喜是佛法修行的精髓。」 - Ed.

「四無量心」(四梵住)中有「喜無量心」 - Ed.

人世間的煩惱雖繁，但至少不要把白天的煩惱和憂愁帶到床上，晚上睡覺要安安穩穩地睡；也不要把悲傷苦悶帶到飯桌上，吃飯的時候，歡歡喜喜地吃。傷心難過不要带到明天，更不要掛在臉上讓別人看到，影響別人。 - Ed.

「經常以慈悲的眼睛視眾生，與人關注，給人溫馨，對人瞻仰。要常說良言美語使人歡喜，說幫助慰勉的話，說有建設性的話，說鼓舞讚美的話，要時常面帶微笑，流露慈悲，布施祥和，那麼慈悲的眼睛，面上的微笑，以及良言美語，這就是人生的淨土。」 - Ed.

譬如點頭招呼，舉手之勞的服務，恰到好處的讚美，真誠的關心，都是隨喜的道德生活。當你吃到珍餚美味時，請你的朋友和你共嘗，你會覺得食品的味道更芬芳。當你聽到金玉良言時，轉告你的朋友和你共守，你會感到人生的境界更寬廣。而你若能將佛法的法味珠璣，布施給你的朋友，甚至一切眾生，你的生命更美化，生活更充實、更有意義了。大家不要忘了：把你的微笑，隨時展現在你的臉上；把『你好』的親切招呼，隨時掛在你的嘴邊；把隨喜的功德，融入你的生活之中。 - Ed.

「個人的享樂，其樂是有限的。譬如說一個人欣賞電視，不如很多人共同欣賞比較有情趣。再者，個人的
快樂與大眾分享，並不影響於個人的快樂……把快樂分享給別人，又可從別人的快樂中增添自己的快樂。

－Ed.

「真正的歡喜，是要在眾生身上求得；真正的歡喜，是從真理中發覺內心的寶藏。」－Ed.

「而是以法為樂，以空為樂，法喜、空樂，才是真正的喜樂。世間一切，我們不一定要占有，享有的快樂更甚於占有。」－Ed.


179「真正的歡喜，是要在眾生身上求得；真正的歡喜，是從真理中發覺內心的寶藏。」－Ed.

180「而是以法為樂，以空為樂，法喜、空樂，才是真正的喜樂。世間一切，我們不一定要占有，享有的快樂更甚於占有。」－Ed.


186今日佛教衰微的原因，就是過分地忽略了世間資生的問題，急於要求證出世的解脫，致使世人減我佛教為絕緣，為厭世……沒有人世的事業，人類的實際生活脫了節，國家不愛，父母不孝，朋友不親，這樣怎能容存於天地社會之間？－Ed.


188「佛法在世間，不離世間覺，離世覓菩提，恰如覓兔角。」－Ed.

189「懂得世間之常道，才堪論出世。」－Ed.

186 Hsing Yun, *Humble Table, Wise Fare* (Taiwan: Gandha Samudra Culture Company, 2004), 194.

191「我們贊成出世的思想，但出世思想首先要有人世的精神，有人世的精神，然後再昇華為出世的思想。」－Ed.


193「小乘苦行的出家人的思想，並不適宜於在家大眾的佛教。」－Ed.


195《善生經》－Ed.

196《玉耶女經》－Ed.

197「美其名曰修行，實則做菩薩道的逃兵。」－Ed.

198「沒有出世的思想，在世間從事事業，會有貪心，會有執著；有了出世的思想，再做入世的事業，就等於文言不愛財，武將不怕死，見到金錢不動心，遇到生死無所懼，這種力量要從出世的思想培養起來。」－Ed.

199「人間所有的問題，佛教都有辦法解決，佛教應當仁不讓，主動擔負起淨化社會的責任。」－Ed.

200「佛法為體，世學為用。」－Ed.

201「對民生經濟、國際形勢、民主權、自然生態、教育改革、種族衝突、暴力、機器人、器官捐贈、基因研究、看相卜卦等種種問題，以佛法的智慧，提供契機契機的對治辦法。此外，對自殺、死刑、核武、戰爭、以及安寧死、複製人等問題，皆應吸取世間的醫學、心理學、生化科學為用，融和佛法的理體，以解除現代人的迷惑。」－Ed.


203《佛教的財富觀》、《佛教的道德觀》、《佛教的女性觀》、《佛教的福壽觀》、《佛教的未來觀》、《佛教對命運的看法》、《佛教對社會問題的療法》、《佛教對自然界問題的療法》、《佛教對心理問題的療法》、《佛教對謀略問題的療法》－Ed.

204《佛教教科書》中的《佛教與世學》、《實用佛學》分冊－Ed.

205《佛教》叢書中的《教用》專冊－Ed.

206把心找回來、七誡運動、慈悲愛心列車、三好運動、世界佛學會考、監獄布教－Ed.

207「因應每一時代的需要，把佛陀慈悲的精神，普示於社會，也就是要現代化於每一個時代。」「把過去諸佛、大德的教化，以現代人熟悉、樂意接受的方式，揭露於大眾。」－Ed.


209「現代化的佛教是實實在在以解決人生問題為主旨，以人文主義為本位的宗教，而不是虛幻不實的玄思清談。」－Ed.
Venerable Master Hsing Yun's Humanistic Buddhism: New Dawn of True Dharma


211 「此時、此地、此人」-Ed.

212 「不但要隨著時代社會而進步，並且要走在時代的前端，領導著現代的人心思潮向前邁進」-Ed.


214 「讓佛法從山林寺院走上社會學校，從經樓殿堂走進書店機構，從出家僧眾到達在家人士，從排字印刷到達電腦資訊」-Ed.


216 「從佛教各宗各派說到各種修持的方法」A transcript of this talk can be found on the Humanistic Buddhism Reader, http://www.hbreader.org/wenji/renjianfojiaoxilie10001.html -Ed.

217 二十世紀以後西方文明的巨浪席捲整個世界，機器的運作，加快了人們的腳步，物質的增產，刺激了人們的享受欲望。人們隨著機械的輪子，馬不停蹄地汲汲於營生糊口，而忘記停下腳步來看看自己；生活競爭的激烈，人和人之間的疏離感越來越嚴重，感官的過度享受，使人們麻醉了自己的性靈，虛無、失落，遂成為這個時代的時髦名詞。-Ed.

218 「多了金錢、色情與暴力，少了禮儀、美德與善知識。」-Ed.


220 「地球是我們的家」-Ed.

221 《佛教現代化》-Ed.

222 所謂佛教現代化，目的即將佛教慈悲、容忍的精神提供給社會作參考，希望社會遵循著佛教的平等法、因緣法、因果法等原則原理，而臻於至善至美之境地。社會如果透過佛法的指引，因此而充實了內涵品質，提高了精神層次，那麼佛教對於這個時代，社會，才具有存在的意義。社會的進步化、現代化，才真正是佛教所以走上現代化的宗旨所在！-Ed.

223 「是個天生具有融和性格的人」-Ed.

224 「法界圓融」-Ed.

225 《人間佛教的基本思想》-Ed.

226 「人間圓融的時代」-Ed.

227 「要把最原始的佛陀時代到現代的佛教，融和起來，統攝起來。」-Ed.

228 《佛光教科書・佛光學》-Ed.

229 佛光山及佛光會不僅提倡男女性別的融和，貧富貴賤的融和，士農工商的融和，國家種族的融和，也積極謀求宗教之間的融和，傳統與現代的融和，僧眾與俗眾的融和，更兼顧佛法與世學的融和，佛法與生活的一切融和，凡此均為法界融和思想的實踐。所以，法界融和是佛光學基本的內涵精神，不但大小乘要融和，顯密要融和，而且應擴大到種族融和，古今融和，當世佛學、事理融和……使世界融和一體，不分種族、國界、同中有異，異中有同，能和諧相處。-Ed.

230 「中道」-Ed.

231 「法界圓融」-Ed.

232 「八萬四千法門，每一道門皆是人佛之道，不可以說：你的究竟，我的不究竟。」-Ed.


234 「法界圓融」-Ed.

235 「過去佛教主要靠出家人來弘揚發展，固然有其時代的背景因素，然而時至今日，佛教已經傳播到全球五大洲，僅憑少數出家人的努力，顯然不足；再說隨著教育的普及，在家眾中，才學豐富者也不在少數，大家何不敞開心胸，彼此尊重，相互融和，在一個教主佛陀的感召之下統一起来，在一個人間佛教的信仰之下動員起来。」-Ed.


237 「佛的女性觀」-Ed.

238 「佛的婦女的故事」-Ed.

239 「佛光教科書・佛光學」-Ed.

240 「佛光山的發展或佛光會的成立，主要的目的就是希望把傳統的佛教融入到現代人的生活之中。」-Ed.

241 「其實，我相當保守，也很執著傳統。」-Ed.

242 Hsing Yun, Hsing Yun's Hundred Saying Series 4 - Half and Half (Beijing: Modern Publishing House, 2008), 12.

243 「法界圓融的體會」-Ed.

244 「法界圓融的體會」-Ed.

245 「身心俱泯，大地空曠」、「念而無念」、「無人無我」乃至「時間、空間、天地萬物都為之一空」-Ed.