



# BODHI BULLETIN

DHARMA NEWS FROM BODHI MONASTERY • FEBRUARY 2003

## The Right Concept of Time

When talking about the Buddha Dharma, we first need to establish a concept of time. Most people do not take sufficient account of time, but the Buddha taught that time, as the basis for the principal of cause-and-effect, is of prime importance for understanding human existence.

**Time flows through past, present, and future;**

**The Buddha illustrated cause-and-effect with three periods;**

**Resolve to remove, build, create, and develop in daily life;**

**Utilize time well, make progress, and open anew.**

The first line of the verse says: "Time flows through past, present, and future." The Buddha taught that time is continuous, that the past, the present, and the future are connected into a seamless flow. No matter how far back we go, there is still a past beyond that past; the past goes so far back you cannot find a beginning. So, from a long, long time ago, sentient beings have been transmigrating in the cycle of life and death.

On the other side of the present moment lies the future. The future continues so far ahead that there is no end in sight. There is always a future beyond the future. Thus if we compare the past and the future, we can say that the past is without beginning, the future without end. It is the present that links the past and the future, and it is in the present that our life unfolds.

Ordinary people do not understand how cause-and-effect operates in the present. Why? Because they do not understand that the present is the result of causes from the past. Likewise, all the actions that we perform in this present life in turn function as new causes, which will produce effects we reap in the future. Most people choose to ignore this fact. They do not want to study or discuss what happened in the past, and to them the future is blank and meaningless. They care only about the present.

Under these circumstances, most people only want to indulge in the pleasures of life, always looking for comfort and enjoyment. Such material indulgence leads only to entrapment, which brings extreme affliction. When one perceives life through distorted lenses and builds one's activities upon false values, one will never be able to make progress, for one is trapped by one's false views.

The reason the Buddha spoke about the interconnectedness of past, present and future was to demonstrate the operation of the law of causality in the past and future. By understanding this, you will not perceive your lives as being isolated or independent of everything else. Thus your views will gradually open up, and you will not feel pessimistic, trapped by current limitations. By taking into account the backward and forward extensions of time, when things go well in your life you will not be carried away by joy, for you understand that your fortune is the result of good causes you planted in the past. And when things go badly, you will not be regretful since you realize your problems stem from a lack of good causes in the past. Looking at the world we live in, with the current political environment and low social morality, we are constantly affected and bothered.

You must say to yourselves: "Now that I have learned the Buddha Dharma, I am responsible for taking what I have learned, building up a clear conception of the law of cause-and-effect, and teaching it to others." Teach others not to over-indulge themselves in times of success, and not to be discouraged or depressed in times of difficulty. Rather, one should use the difficult times as an opportunity to enhance one's good human spirit.

*(The above is an excerpt from a series of lectures by Ven. Master Jen-Chun on "the basic concepts that anyone learning Buddhism should have." These were the preliminary lectures to the study of Ven. Master Yin-Shun's The Way to Buddhahood.)*



### FEBRUARY DHARMA ACTIVITIES

• Ven. Master Jen-Chun and Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi will be giving Dharma Talks at the New York Vipassana Meditation Center on Sunday, February 9th.

Bhante Dharma Talk: 10:30-11:30am  
Shifu Dharma Talk: 1:30-3:30pm.  
Refreshments provided.

Address:  
133-32 41st Rd. #3,  
Flushing, NY 11354  
Phone: 718-423-4157

• Shifu will give Dharma Talks in Chinese (with English translations) at the Ch'an Center on Sundays, Feb. 2nd and Feb. 16th from 10:00-11:30am.

Address:  
90-56 Corona Ave.  
Elmhurst, NY 11373  
Phone: 718-592-6593

BODHI MONASTERY  
67 Lawrence Road  
Lafayette, NJ 07848

metta

Please call or e-mail us for more information:  
tel: 973.940.0473 email: [info@bodhimonastery.net](mailto:info@bodhimonastery.net)



## February Saturday Dharma Talk Schedule

Ven. Master Jen-Chun and Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi will be giving Dharma Talks through February.

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### SAT., FEB. 1ST

10:00am-10:45am	Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi Dharma Talk
10:55am-11:30am	Monthly Ceremony (Circumambulation, chanting, offerings)
11:35am-12:00pm	Lunch/Free time
12:00pm-1:00pm	Merit Gathering (volunteer chores)
1:15pm-2:00pm	Ven. Master Jen-Chun Dharma Talk

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### SAT., FEB. 8TH, 15TH & 22ND

10:00am-10:45am	Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi Dharma Talk
11:15am-12:00pm	Lunch/Free time
12:00pm-1:00pm	Merit Gathering (volunteer chores)
1:15pm-2:00pm	Ven. Master Jen-Chun Dharma Talk

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## Bodhi Monastery Contact Information

Public Relations Matters, contact Ven. Antony (Zhi-Han)

Shifu's Teaching Schedule, contact Ven. John (Guo-Ching)  
Donations, contact Ven. John

Basic Meditation Instruction, contact Ven. Adam (Zhi-Kang)

We receive telephone calls from 8:00-9:00am and 7:00-8:00pm only. You can also leave a message at any time of the day from 8:00am-8:00pm and we will return your call as soon as we can.

Please call or e-mail us for more information –  
tel: 973-940-0473 or email: [info@bodhimonastery.net](mailto:info@bodhimonastery.net)

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REMINDER: EVENING CHANTING LITURGY IS HELD 7 DAYS A WEEK  
FROM 4:30PM-5:00PM. ALL ARE WELCOME.

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## B O D H I B R I E F S

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### CLASSES:

Shifu's Lectures on Madhyamaka philosophy, Tuesday and Thursday mornings, 9:00-10:00am (in Chinese only).

Bhante's class on Majjhima Nikaya, Tuesday evenings, 7:00-8:00pm (in English only). Newcomers can join at any time. The course will be ongoing for approximately the next two years. There is no fee.

### UPCOMING DHARMA ACTIVITIES:

Ajahn Amaro will visit Bodhi Monastery, April 29th-May 1st. He will give a Dharma Talk on Wednesday evening, April 30th at 7:00pm.

The Introductory Course on Buddhism and Meditation will be given again some time in May. It is a 6-week course running on six consecutive Saturdays. We will post the exact dates in a future bulletin.

The Bodhi Monastery week-long 2003 Dharma Retreat will be held this summer from Friday, July 18th - Friday, July 25th.

### MEDITATION:

Ven. Adam will give basic meditation instruction on Feb. 2nd from 9:30-11:00am. Instruction is given on the first Sunday of every month. Please inform us that you are coming and leave contact information.

All are welcome to join our ongoing sitting and walking meditation group guided by Bhante and Shifu. We meet every Sunday from 9:30-11:00am in the Buddha Hall. If you have no previous meditation experience, we ask that within the first month of sitting with us you take the basic meditation instruction here.

Please use the Buddha Hall for meditation while the Meditation Room is being repaired. Buddha Hall is available for use from 9:00am-4:30pm daily. Dress warmly in layers for meditation since the Buddha Hall is cold.