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**INTERNATIONAL BUDDHIST SANGHA  
AND GLOBAL CONNECTION:  
A CASE STUDY OF THE MASTER HSING YUN**

**Abstract:** In 1999, Judith Nagata wrote the article: *The Globalization of Buddhism and the Emergence of Religious Civil Society: The Case of the Taiwanese Fo Guang Shan Movement in Asia and the West*. According to his experience of the world religious movement today, the Fo Guang Shan Monastery (hereafter called "FGS"), has shown its features of a globalizing religion as – worldly social engaged engagement and value of various dimension to the civil society and the masses. The result of his study was to figure out the ideal of Humanistic Buddhism and the achievement of Master Hsing Yun (hereafter called "MHY") before 1999. After more than one decade the global movement and socially engaged activities of the FGS will be the core of this article. The author attempts to argue how the *Buddhist Sangha* (community) of the FGS, which was established by MHY since 1967, was considered as an International standard and what is a global connection. Master Hsing Yun is supposed to be a case study in this article.

**Keywords:** *Master Hsing Yun, Fo Guang Shan Monastery, Global movement, socially engaged Buddhism, Humanistic Buddhism*

### Profile of Master Hsing Yun (1927~)



Profession: Founder of the International Buddhist Order Fo Guang Shan(FGS)

Educational Background: Temple Discipline

- ✧ 1967 Founded FGS and began promoting “Humanistic Buddhism”
- ✧ 1992 Established the World Headquarter Buddha’s Light International Association, CA, USA
- ✧ 2004 Buddha’s Light International Association granted him NGO status by the United Nations
- ✧ Presented with honorary doctorate degrees by 13 universities in Taiwan and overseas
- ✧ There are 300 branches of the FGS monastery, and 50 schools, as well as 16 Buddhist Colleges, 22 art galleries and 26 libraries throughout the world, and five universities in USA, Australia, Philippine, and in Taiwan.

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#### I. General Overview

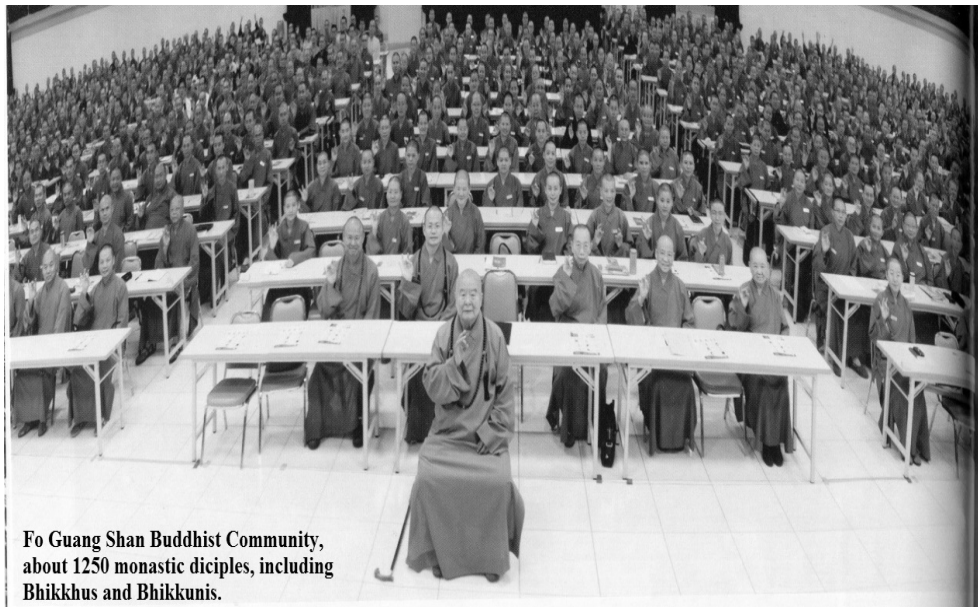
Master Hsing Yun (MHY) was born in Jianshu province in 1927 and ordained in 1941, inheriting of 48th Linzhi Ch’an lineage. In the civil war of 1949, he led a group of monks, i.e., “The *Sangha* Monastics Relief Team”, and crossed the sea to Taiwan. Since then, he started the propagation of Humanistic Buddhism. Today MHY is recognized as a reformer and revivalist of Chinese Buddhism. Thus, MHY is an example of leadership, leading two Buddhist Communities, the Buddhist *Sangha* and the lay Buddhist elite, which mutually co-operated to drive Mahayana Buddhism, also known as the “Great Vehicle” or the “Bodhisattva

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Path”. Following the traditional practice aspects, MHY has designed a landscape of Humanistic Buddhism adjusted to our modern age. He actually has reached not just geographical expansion, but also broke all boundaries between different sectarian religions, as well as the interfaith of various groups of folk religion while he travelled across Taiwan from Mainland China.

In the FGS Monastery, however, there were not one thousand and more disciples in those branches and 47 years back there wasn't any branch of FGS Monastery. Now there are more than 300 branches in Taiwan and abroad. The founder, Grand Master Hsing Yun, came to Taiwan from Mainland China in 1949, with Nothing but the clothes on his back. He was suspected to be a spy from the Mainland and put into jail when he arrived in Taiwan. Initially, he did not have a single penny but he brought Buddhism with a wholehearted enthusiasm to Taiwan.



Over 75 years, MHY, spread his ideal of Humanistic Buddhism worldwide. Buddha's Light is shining in the universe today. On this issue, the writer would like to share with you the feeling that MHY does not desire to have a large kingdom of the FGS Monastery, nor does he want to create a world of his own. Obviously, he established a large Buddhist Sangha, which nourishes Buddhist talents, and where the members of the Sangha take a strict disciplined life and take right guidance from the MHY himself. Today a group of disciples are considered as "Pillars of Buddhism, the Universal Brightness of the Buddha's Light". They have established FGS Monasteries in the world, and those branches serve complex function such as:

Buddhist temple, simple meditation center, education & cultural center, and they also host other dhamma activities, such as Buddhist art exhibition gallery, water drop tea house, bookstore, library as well as Television Station and Merit Time Daily newspaper etc. Each representing Buddhist temples can accommodate as many as one thousand people for dhamma functions and other activities, such as meetings, conferences and so on. At the same time, over fifty Chinese schools, and sixteen Buddhist Colleges were established in Taiwan and abroad: in India, Hong Kong, Africa, Brazil, Australia, and Malaysia. In addition, the Pu-Men High School, the Jun-tou Junior School, the Jun-yi Junior School, and the University of West in the U.S., two Universities in Taiwan: the Fo Guang University in Ilan, and Nan Hua University in Chiayi were also established.

Besides these, in 1957, he began to organize the Buddhist Culture Service Center, he started publishing Buddhist Series in Chinese and English, various Chinese Sutras in the vernacular style, and audio-visual materials on Buddhism. Each of these projects later became part of the Fo Guang Publishing House where various Buddhist books are published. Moreover, he even re-compiled over 300 volumes of the “Fo Guang Tripitaka” (rewriting by modern Chinese) as well as the Fo Guang Buddhist Dictionary in book form and electronic on a CD-ROM. The most significant of these is the Fo Guang Chinese Tripitaka, which was re-edited in a new version and with new punctuation under the supervision of the Grand Master since 1977. In 1999, each section of the Chinese Tripitaka, such as the Aagama series, the Pure Land series, the Lotus Sutras series, and others were continuously finished in book form and electronic on a CD-ROM. Another valuable contribution of the Grand Master with assistance from professors from the Pai Jing University, the Szechwan, the Rinmin University and the Nan Jing University, was the publishing of the 100 volumes of the “Chinese Buddhist academic Series”. This collection of Chinese Dharma books contains Masters’ and Ph.D. theses from the past century from both Taiwan and Mainland China. “A collection of Chinese Buddhist Cultural Essays” was also published in 100 volumes.

Various foundations have been established since 1988: The “Fo Guang Shan Foundation for Culture and Education,” the “Fo Guang Pureland Culture and Education,” and the “Humanistic Culture and Education Foundation.” These foundations are responsible for organizing all kinds of international academic seminars and conferences as well as for the publication of related journals. In order to promote educational, cultural, and charitable programs in different regions, it is resolved that the BLIA Members support the “Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s Education”. They are two universities in Taiwan, Nan Hua, located in the Chiayi County, and Fo Guang in Yilan, the University of the West in LA, California, United States, and Nan Tien established in Australia. MHY (2013), will start the

fifth university named Guang Ming University, in Manila, Philippines. He has received honorary doctorate degrees from twelve universities in Taiwan as well as abroad.

The most remarkable event is that, in order to enshrine a piece of Buddha's relic, MHY devoted his mind to completing the most significant construction, the Buddha Memorial Center, in 2011.<sup>1</sup> To be noted that Buddhism has given new facet of ideas; the newly created space to accommodate all religions and non-religious people as well.



*FGS, Buddha Memorial Center, Kaohsiung, Taiwan (photo by Biyun Chen, 2013)*

According to Fu Zhing, “An uncertain journey would carry Hsing Yun across the open sea, enabling the lamp of Chinese Buddhism to this other shore as a separate transmission [...] The springtime of youth comes only once to a life, but without hesitation, Hsing Yun now entered an era of unavoidable turmoil, and proceeded down his path in search of ideals”.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Words from Venerable Master Hsing Yun: “Enshrining the Buddha's tooth relic inside the Buddha Memorial Center was meant to emphasize the supernatural. Rather, the goal of enshrining the Buddha's tooth relics was to create activities that show the Buddha's compassion and wisdom in a way that people can experience concretely.”(Pan Xuan, trans. Robert Smitheram 2013:27)

## II. Historical Overview of Taiwan's religions before MHY arrival

In the early age, Taiwan was merely an island where fishers from China arrived and rested for a few days before going back. After that, around the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, it was dominated by people from Holland who named it Formosa (Beautiful Island). Finally, four centuries ago, mid-17<sup>th</sup> Century, Han migrants from southeastern China introduced Taoism and Buddhism to Taiwan, while Protestant missionaries attached to the Dutch East India Company which established posts in southwestern Taiwan beginning in 1624, proselytized to the Han and indigenous peoples. Meanwhile, Roman Catholic missionaries came in 1626 to the Taiwanese northern coastal area, which represented Spanish colonial holdings in the Philippines. Until 1642, the Dutch drove the Spanish off the island. Other religions were introduced over the next three and a half centuries, with a large influx following World War II, when a new wave of mainland immigrants arrived in Taiwan. These included I-Kuan Tao and several others that are fusions of Taoism, Confucianism and other traditional Chinese schools of religious and philosophical thought. Following the democratization, in the late of 1980s, the establishment of new denominations has lifted their high position in Taiwan.<sup>3</sup>

Particularly, how did the initiation of Buddhism in Taiwan happen? The Chinese coastal provinces of Fujian and Guangdong was the place where the first immigrants brought Buddhism to Taiwan. However, they were considered “*zhaijiao*”, a form of lay Buddhism comprising several sects dating back to the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). Featuring admixtures of Taoism and Neo-Confucianism, they observed vegetarianism. In the second half of the 17th century, Buddhist monks first arrived from Fujian. Temple construction began in Tainan and progressed northward of China. In 1683, they took control of western Taiwan. According to *Kan Zheng-Chung*, the development of Buddhism in Taiwan has been divided into four periods. The first stage: the transmitting period of Buddhism, which was the time of Ming and Qin dynasty, when Buddhism was brought onto the island from Mainland China by the Han people. This was also called “*The style of Min-Yeh Buddhism*” (the belief in Chan Buddhism but mixed with *Jing-Tu*). There were a few monks only but not very educated, not part of the big *Sangha* (community) and mainly lay people. There were three groups: the Pre-Heaven

<sup>2</sup> Fu Zhiyng, “Taking on Responsibility for Buddhism’s Rise or Fall,” in *Bright Star Luminous Cloud: The Life of a Simple Monk* (USA: Buddha’s Light Publishing, 2008), 52.

<sup>3</sup> “The Republic of China Yearbook 2012. Office of Information Services, Executive Yuan, 2012,” accessed April 22, 2013, <http://www.ey.gov.tw/en/cp.aspx?n=4ADC064334D460FA>.

school, the Dragon-Flower school, and the Golden-Pillar school.<sup>4</sup> The second stage was the Japanese Buddhism; the period of Japanese Buddhism 1895 to 1945, Taiwanese Buddhist scholars have been influenced by Japan. The textual research with scientific direction, a new methodology in Japan, will be the most modern Buddhist study introduced into Taiwan. Therefore, we are told that, at some level, the situation of Taiwan Buddhism before 1949, however, was something in between localization and injecting new elements. After that, until the 1970's, it was the foundation of Chinese Buddhism, the following political transfer and the further development of Buddhism with the arrival of Chinese monks among the refugees who relocated to the island during the Chinese Civil War in the late 1940s. It is remarkable that Chinese Buddhism had been established during this period of almost 30 years. Evidently, in over more than 60 years, we have seen that the enlarged scope of the missionary work has transformed into a new movement, into new diversities of propagation.

### III. The propagation of Buddhism in Taiwan after 1949



Here I would like to discuss the following question: “What was the political and religious situation of Taiwan when MHY arrived there?” According to the *Chronology of the Venerable Master Hsing Yun*, in 1949, he arrived in Keelung, Taiwan, with a monastic relief group. He was arrested by the police along with Master Cihang and others on allegations of subversive activities, and incarcerated

<sup>4</sup> Kan Zheng-Chung, “For nearly 50 years Taiwan development of Buddhism in Taiwan,” in *Buddhism in 100 years* (Taipei: East Books, 1999), 209-210.

for twenty-three days.<sup>5</sup> His group and companion monks quickly disbanded. MHY was only twenty-three at that time he was seeking shelter in Taipei. He was repeatedly refused with excuses; the answer was that they were either “full” or, unprepared to accommodate travelers from outside the province. At night he had to deal with extremely cold weather and hunger. He walked into the knee-deep rainwater and soaked his only change of clothes. Finally he curled up for the night under the big bell at the Sandao Temple. As a stranger in the strange land, MHY could not speak a word of the local dialect. Next he went to his classmate at a monastery in Keelung. At the time, he described that he had no food and water. No one was able to provide him anything but a desperate attitude. People were barely able to feed themselves in order to survive. When he realized that the situation was hard, he decided to leave. His friend, however, cooked a pot of porridge for him and paid for the rice from his own small earnings. As MHY held the bowl in his hands trembling and hungry. Being young, and in a strange country, without anyone’s help - it must have been a very difficult situation for him.<sup>6</sup>

Liu Yung-qi describes the economic and social condition of Taiwan from two points of view, first from the point of view of a Taiwanese, and then from overseas Chinese economic status and their development in different countries.<sup>7</sup> He mentions in his “*Cultural Buddhism is the Effective Method to Propagate Humanistic Buddhism*”, that young people living in the villages of Taiwan started to move into cities for work. Due to their hard work and enthusiasm to earn for better living the city improved and this attracted more and more youngsters. However, where the economy developed they lost spiritual development. Gradually they started searching for ways to develop their spiritual life. MHY used modern methods to teach Buddhism to the young men and women. The people found that useful for their spiritual development and accepted. In this process the young generations were helped by Buddhism. This process began in 1970’s.

From the Chinese (overseas) point of view, he describes that the development started during the 1980’s. According to him, the economic conditions of Chinese people living in different countries, started to get better. Among those overseas, many were Buddhist believers. They contributed their donations to building temples, printing of sutras, requesting monks for dhamma classes etc. Due to this, the FGS started propagating Buddhism abroad and gradually it became a

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<sup>5</sup> Fu Chi-ying, “Chronology of Venerable Master Hsing Yun,” in *The Biography of Venerable Master Hsing Yun: Handing Down the Light*, trans. Army Lui-Ma (California: Buddha’s Light Publishing, 2004), 325.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 46-47.

<sup>7</sup> Liu Yung-qi, “Cultural Buddhism is the Effective Method to Propagate Humanistic Buddhism”, in *Theory and Practice of Humanistic Buddhism* (Chuanghua Bookstore, 2007), 29.



global organization. Not only that, but it also became multicultural and diversified in nature. Due to this, many people came to know Buddhism abroad.

According to Robert P. Weller, the island returned to Chinese control after World War II, but was still considered a backwater. Relations between local Taiwanese and the new government had already deteriorated when the Communist victors of 1949 forced the Nationalist government to flee to Taiwan.<sup>8</sup> Taiwan led by President Chiang Kai-shek, and under the leadership of the National Party (*Guamindang*) was under a “state of emergency”. As a newcomer, MHY has dealt with tough conditions. Around the same time period, Taiwanese Buddhism, nevertheless, had no self-identity, as it was infused with local deities and cults, and some temples in Taipei were undertaken by military recruitment centers.<sup>9</sup> At the Basis of the research of Taiwan’s religious evolution, scholars expressed their belief that the dominant faith was Polytheism, as Daoist temples that were rapidly being built. Many deities such as Mazu, Lu Donbin, the earth gods, rock gods, and tree gods were depicted in conjunction with Buddhist motifs and symbols. We found also architecture, rituals from both Daoist and Buddhist traditions, making it difficult to distinguish between these two traditions.<sup>10</sup> Back then, the Buddhist monasteries, however, could only provide basic necessities of life with the meager finances. Because, Taiwan was experiencing an economic plight, substantial monetary gifts were nearly impossible, but Taiwanese temples were constructed and sustained by donations from devotees and contributions made to monastics.<sup>11</sup> According to Yifa, following a hundred –year decline that began late in the nineteenth century, most people regarded Buddhist teachings as pessimistic, and the religion itself as an escape from society. Beginning in the 1970s, however, a new face of Buddhism has begun.

According to Master Hsing Yun’s writing “*The Founding of Fo Guang Shan*”, we are told that at the beginning of founding the monastery, the place wasn’t accepted by his lay disciples. It was told that even ghosts refuse to haunt that place. But, MHY insisted and pushed his own vision. He said that “It’s okay if ghosts don’t come, it’s fine as long as Buddha comes...”. The place was located in a remote village, named “Martru garden”, in Kaohsiung county. MHY had a strong belief: “This may become the Kaohsiung City Center in a few decades.” He has

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<sup>8</sup> Robert P. Weller, “Living at the Edge: Religion, Capitalism, and the End of the Nation-State in Taiwan,” *Public Culture* 12, no. 2 (May 2000): 477.

<sup>9</sup> Judith Nagata, “The Globalisation of Buddhism and the Emergence of Religious Civil Society: The Case of the Taiwanese Fo Kuang Shan Movement in Asia and the West,” *Communal / Plural: Journal Of Transnational & Crosscultural Studies*, vol. 7, no. 2 (1999): 231.

<sup>10</sup> Fu Chi-ying, “Chronology of Venerable Master Hsing Yun,” 48-49.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

named the mountain, “Buddha Light Mountain-Fo Guang Shan”. Thus on May 16<sup>th</sup>, 1967, Fo Guang Shan was founded.<sup>12</sup>

MHY applied new and dynamic methods for dharma propagation, and according to people from different levels of education, age, sex, race, cultural and custom etc. the FGS monastery has developed a transformation from the traditional Buddhist concept of a *Sangha* into a globalized Buddhist community adopting two assemblies: *Sangha* members and laymen.



MHY has built a landscape of Humanistic Buddhism to the new age of Buddhism. He wrote: “For fifty years, devotees from the South and the North have gathered, be it Marzu or Wangye, the many deities gods, have visited the Buddha. The Inauguration of the Buddha Memorial Center Big Buddha, and the Fo Guang Boulevard, have connected the Fo Guang Shan and the Center, so that from here, the Dharma will be propagated throughout the world.”<sup>13</sup>

#### IV. Propagating Humanistic Buddhism

The concept of Humanism is originally innate in Buddha’s thought, and was actively practiced by Buddha himself. In other words, it is an interesting remark

<sup>12</sup> Master Hsiung Yun, “The Founding of Fo Guang Shan,” in *Fo Guang Shan: Our Report*, ed. Miao Kai, trans. Miao Guang (Kaohsiung: Life News Agency, 2012), 7.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

that the concept of Humanism has been inherent in Buddhism. There are some evidences to support this. Buddhism emphasizes the practice of the teaching in the human world rather than the other world. According to the Buddha to be born as a human is a consequence of the accumulation of meritorious actions of the past and the human realm is superior to the other five realms. The Buddha himself was born as a human being, practiced and attained Enlightenment in this human world therefore, one must make efforts to be a better human and finally to become the Enlightened One.



*Love and Peace Prayer ceremony held inside the Buddha Memorial Center, 2011*

#### **IV.1 The Ideal of Humanistic Buddhism by MHY**

Humanistic Buddhism is not the creation of His Community, i.e., the Fo Guang Shan Monastery and Buddha's Light International Association, rather, the rationale for Humanistic Buddhism derives from the Buddha, because the Buddha was born, cultivated the path, became enlightened, and strived to enlighten others in this world. For the Buddha, it is this world that should take precedence. He lived among the people, and what he transmitted was Humanistic Buddhism. According to Naichen Chen, "Humanistic Buddhism as propagated by Master Hsing Yun is a

Bodhisattva Way leading towards perfect enlightenment.”<sup>14</sup> MHY opened the concept of Humanistic Buddhism, with this statement: “People come into this world because they have a life to live [...] life is not confined to human beings, but is in fact the mind of all sentient.” It means that MHY has proposed the value and dignity on equality of all life forms from the universe, rather considering that only the human is superior. However, MHY would stress that humanism in Humanistic Buddhism. Therefore, MHY propagated the ideal of Humanistic Buddhism to solve our contemporary problems. His main theme was to deal with people and their affairs with respect, to approach others with tolerance and open-mindedness. He directly emphasized that Humanistic Buddhism was needed in our daily lives. In the past, Buddhism placed more emphasis on leaving the world and living apart from it in the forests and mountains. Today, Buddhism is forsaking the forests and mountains for the society, from temples to homes. Buddhism is living life, making life happier and focusing on the family life spirit.<sup>15</sup> Again, he stressed the purification of life through ethical thought and the elevation of both mind and spirit. If you believe in the law of cause and effect and practice it in your life, then the law of cause and effect is Humanistic Buddhism. Thus, the following teachings of Buddha: compassion and practice, taking refuge in the Triple Gem, the five precepts, the six perfections, and the ten wholesome conducts all are Humanistic Buddhism.<sup>16</sup> It is not difficult to understand the theory of Humanistic Buddhism, according to MHY; however, it is hard to practice. Therefore, in order to make this easier for people, he put together a book “*Humanistic Buddhism: a blueprint for life*”. The book contains twenty topics which are based on Buddhist scriptures and examples of virtuous behavior from the past. These topics are as follows<sup>17</sup>:

1. Ethics – the way of home life
2. Morality – the way of cultivation.
3. Livinghood – the way of using resources
4. Emotions – the way of love and affection
5. Society – the way of oneself and others
6. Loyalty and filialness – the way of establishing oneself
7. Wealth – the way of financial management
8. Long life and happiness – the way of ownership
9. Maintaining good health – the way of medicine
10. Compassion – the way of creating affinities

<sup>14</sup> Naichen Chen, “Universal Ethics in the Context of Globalization and Humanistic Buddhism,” *His Lai Journal of Humanistic Buddhism* 3 (2002): 4.

<sup>15</sup> Master Hsing Yun, Preface for *Humanistic Buddhism : A Blueprint for Life*, trans. John Balcome (Hacienda Heights, CA: Buddha's Light Pub., 2003), x.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, xi.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, xii-xiii.

11. Cause and effect – the way of dependent origination
12. Religion – the way of faith
13. Life – the way of life and death
14. Knowledge – the way of advanced studies
15. Education and amusement – the way of correct life
16. Rituals – the way of right views
17. Nature – the way of environmental protection
18. Government – the way of participating in Politics
19. International affairs – the way of tolerance
20. The future – the way of development

MHY has worked incessantly to preach Buddha's words, establishing universities and general education schools for the society, building temples and Buddhist enterprises, and developing Buddha's Light International Association. He had already created new interpretations of traditional Chinese Buddhism which have gone beyond the Eight traditional Schools. Then Buddha's Light School was founded which based its practice on Humanistic Buddhism and utilizes Buddha's Light Philosophy as a system of interpretation and understanding. Moreover, for the better understanding and introducing new concepts to contemporary people, the Fo Guang Shan Conference for Young Academic held in 1990 was given the theme of "Humanistic Buddhism". At this conference MHY spoke about "The Fundamental Concept of Humanistic Buddhism", which contains six main characteristics of Humanistic Buddhism, as follows:<sup>18</sup>

1. Humanistic character
2. Life-oriented character
3. Altruistic character
4. Joyous character
5. Timeless character
6. Liberation-oriented character

He has taken a painful task as his own holy duty to advocate the idea of Humanistic Buddhism. He found that there are controversies between Mahayana and Theravada or between the Chinese and Tibetan traditions, but he ensured that Humanistic Buddhism became the major current of modern Buddhist thought in China. Thus in 1995, he has given a *Series on Buddhism: Humanistic Buddhism*, which included all the essential teachings of the Buddha, the Five vehicles, the Five Precepts, the Ten Wholesome Acts, the Four immeasurable states of mind,

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<sup>18</sup> Fu Zhiying, *Bright Star Luminous Cloud*, trans. Robert H. Smitheram (USA: Buddha's Light Publishing, 2008), 299-301.

the Six Perfections the Four Embracing qualities, the Karmic retribution through causation, the Middle Path of Chan and Pure Land and so on.<sup>19</sup>

Moreover, MHY, has published a set of twelve-volumes of Buddhism Textbook. The eleventh volume was entitled 'Understanding the Buddha's Light Philosophy'. The scope of Buddha's Light (Fo Guang) Philosophy, indicated that everyone has a bodhisattva, is endowed with a life of wisdom, possess a harmonious mental state, and can obtain the joy of the Dharma.<sup>20</sup>

The Buddha's Light International Association (BLIA) was inaugurated in Los Angeles in May 16, 1992, after the establishing of BLIA R.O.C (now BLIA Chunghwa) in 1991. In 2003, BLIA has also been recognized as a non-governmental organization (NGO) with Special Consultative status in the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. MHY has delivered a keynote speech during the annual BLIA General World Conference, as a means to provide members with spiritual guidance and direction for the future development of BLIA.<sup>21</sup> Thus, he advocated the theme, "*Joy and harmony*" for the first BLIA General Conference in LA, USA in 1992, in order to spread the reality of Buddha's teaching as the path of liberation and happiness.<sup>22</sup> He suggested the following concepts:

1. Honor every religious tradition, both their teachings and their followers.
2. Adopt the characteristics and methods of others in a positive, willing, and prudent manner etc.
3. Nourish the world and the human race to be independent, universal and to coexist with the Dharma.
4. Be receptive to modern societies.<sup>23</sup>

The essential teaching of these concepts is the fact that people of different races and ethnic groups can live together in harmony. He introduced the theme, *One theme, One Concept*, then, the theme of "*Oneness and Coexistence*" was given for the second and third Conference, in Vancouver, Canada, in 1993& 1994. Though there are various beings, all beings are equal elements within one embodiment of dependent origination. Through compassion, we can accept and appreciate each other; through harmony, we can coexist.<sup>24</sup> MHY presented four points of view on this theme:

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 303-8.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 309-10.

<sup>21</sup> Master Hsing Yun, "Forward-One Theme One Concept," in *Modern Thoughts, Wise Mentality: A Collection of BLIA General Conference Keynote Speeches (1992-2006)*, trans. Miao His, Miao Guang (Taipei: Gandha Samudra Culture Company, 2006), 3.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 19-20.

1. Oneness and coexistence to make this world complete
2. Equality and tolerance to gather the right conditions
3. Selflessness and unbiased minds to coexist and share in the glories.
4. Mutual benefit and dependence for a balanced and natural life.<sup>25</sup>

The theme of the 4<sup>th</sup> Conference in Sydney, Australia in 1995 was “*Respect and Tolerance*”. He advocated that as Buddhists, we should put forth our best effort to protect all life.<sup>26</sup> Thus, he suggested the following four points about respect:

1. Respect the freedom of others.
2. Respect the value of life.
3. Respect the possessions of others.
4. Respect nature.

With regard to tolerance, he has promoted the teachings of tolerance for the sake of world peace:

1. Have tolerance for those who are different.
2. Have tolerance for those who are suffering.
3. Have tolerance when insulted by enemies.
4. Have tolerance for unintentional mistakes.<sup>27</sup>

Because of increasing abuse of power in politics, the uneven distribution of economic wealth amongst religious or ethnic groups is a consequences of inequality and conflicts. Thus he advocated the theme, “*Equality and Peace*”, for the 5<sup>th</sup> Conference, in Paris, France in 1996<sup>28</sup>. Again, the theme of “*Wholeness and Freeness*” in the 6<sup>th</sup> General Conference in Hong Kong, November 29- December 2 1997.<sup>29</sup> The themes of “*Nature and Life*”<sup>30</sup>, “*One Truth of All*”<sup>31</sup>, “*The Human World and Life*”<sup>32</sup>, “*To Resolve and to Develop*”<sup>33</sup>, “*Self-awareness and Practicing the Buddha’s Way*”<sup>34</sup>, “*Change the World and Benefit Humanity*”<sup>35</sup>, and “*Bodhisattva and Volunteer*”<sup>36</sup>, were the themes for the 7<sup>th</sup> General Conference in

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 24-37.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 45-52.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 86.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 112.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 146.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. 159.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 193.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 229.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 290.

<sup>36</sup> Bodhisattva and Volunteer, Buddha’s Light International Association General Conference, Kaushung, Fo Guang Shan, 2008.

Toronto, Canada, 1998, the 8<sup>th</sup> conference in Taipei, Taiwan, 2000, the 3<sup>rd</sup> BLIA World Headquarters Board of Directors Meeting, in Johannesburg South Africa, 2001, the 9<sup>th</sup> conference in Tokyo Japan, 2002, the 10<sup>th</sup> General Conference in Kaohsiung Taiwan, 2004, the 11<sup>th</sup> General Conference in Taipei, Taiwan, 2006, the 12<sup>th</sup> General Conference, in Kaohsiung FGS, Taiwan, 2008, respectively.

The BLIA is an organization that consists of both monastic and lay Buddhist, BLIA chapters and subchapters are founded in over one hundred countries or regions across the world and this is currently the world's biggest Chinese community. In addition to promoting Buddhism, the BLIA actively promotes the Reading Association, Young Adult Divisions and Scouts and encourages them to participate in social welfare cultural, educational and charitable works.

Just as 2600 years ago, the Buddha reformed his Brahmins times, he reconstructed – through an educational system - a monastic community, which was democratic and peaceful. He refused the gender, race, and caste of discrimination. Buddha created the means of lighting up spiritual lives. Upon taking the same duty to innovate the new age of Humanistic Buddhism, MHY, proposed the revival of Buddhism in Taiwan and all over the world. He thought, it depended on Buddhist education, but not on the numerous temples built. . The two main systematic communities: monastics and lay devotees, were like two wings of a bird, both of the same importance for a bird to soar in the sky. Therefore, the two groups of Buddhist communities cooperated and worked together under the supervision of MHY.

Charles H.C.Kao, in his publishing “*80 Years of Star and Cloud*”<sup>37</sup>, gave a compendious depiction, “The life of Master Hsing Yun reformed the Buddhist religion, bettered people's hearts, and changed the world.” He describes the Grand Master by saying: “The more time Master spends propagating Humanistic Buddhism abroad, the more he resembles a global citizen.”<sup>38</sup>

Zhao Pu-Chu, the President of Buddhist Association of China said that “What the Buddha had not accomplished is all being done by Master Hsing Yun today”.

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<sup>37</sup> *80 Years of Star and Cloud* is a biography of the Most venerable Master Hsin Yun (an appellation as Grand Master (‘*da-shi*’) by all followers around the world) and an excellent in both of pictures and literary composition. This book was published by Charles H. C. Kao, the funder & CEO, Commonwealth Publishing Group, for celebrating Grand Master's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday and Fo Guang Shan's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, in order to pay their respect to him. There are more than two hundred extremely precious pictures and as well as a summary of Master Hsing Yun's life.

<sup>38</sup> Kao, *80 Years of Star and Cloud*.



Fu Zhiying, a Chinese writer of the Master's biography, "*Bright Star Luminous Cloud*"<sup>39</sup>, describes MHY's contributions to the world of Buddhism as quite profound, and she states that he can indeed claim supreme credit for the development of Buddhism in terms of its systemization, its modernization, its globalization, and its orientation towards humanity. With regard to all his contribution, humans not only entered the world, but brought each a part to the whole global spirit.

According to Nagata, the justification for selecting the Taiwanese Fo Kuang Shan, for closer scrutiny lies in three of its distinctive features. The first has to do with its character as a global religion, particularly its inner-worldliness, involvement of laity and of women, ecumenical tendencies and social engagement. Secondly, he discussed FGS's transformation into a global religious civil society. Lastly, the FGS plays a diplomatic and even more moralistic role in Taiwan's International relations, where more conventional avenues are unavailable.<sup>40</sup>

#### IV.2 The MHY and his achievements

Over the 75 years of his monkhood, MHY had several contributions as mentioned above, but most importantly the two group of disciples -Buddhist Communities, i.e. Buddhist monastics and Buddhist lay devotees, who cooperated completely to take the great tasks from the island of Taiwan and expanded all over the world. In the recent decades, MHY remarkably achieved the following:<sup>41</sup>

- (1) He was honored at the third Presentation of the Special Contribution Medals of the Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall, on the 72<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of the Nanjing Massacre Memorial Day, on December 13, 2009.
- (2) He received the Chinese Lifetime Achievement Award from the Chinese Culture Promotion Society, when the Nanjing Municipal People's Government and Phoenix Satellite Television jointly hosted the "Wisdom from the East-2009 Figures in Chinese Culture (FCC)" on Jan. 13, 2010.
- (3) On March 11, 2010, the University of Hong Kong conferred upon the Venerable Master Hsing Yun an honorary doctorate degree in recognition of his contribution towards society around the world.
- (4) Korea's Guemgang University President Sung Nak-Seung attended Fo Guang Shan's 2010 Sangha Offering Dharma Function on August 31, and presented

<sup>39</sup> Fu Zhiying, *Bright Star Luminous Cloud*, trans. Robert H. Smitheram (USA: Buddha's Light Publishing, 2008).

<sup>40</sup> Nagata, "The Globalisation of Buddhism and the Emergence of Religious Civil Society," 231.

<sup>41</sup> *Review of the 2010 Buddha's Light International Association Directors Meeting* (Taipei: BLIA World Headquarter, 2010), 75-9.

the university's first honorary doctorate degree in literature to the Venerable Master Hsing Yun.

- (5) On August 9, 2010, President S. R. Nathan of Singapore awarded the country's honor to BLIA Singapore Executives: the Public Service Star (BBM) to Dr. Derek Goh Bak Heng and the Public Service Medal (PBM) to Mr. Teo Nangiang Heng, Jackson and Mr. Pang Lim. The recognition had brought great honor to BLIA members.
- (6) On behalf of Fernando Chui Sai On, Chief Executive of Macau, Tse Chi Wai, Chair of the University Council of Macau University confers an Honorary Doctorate Degree in Humanities to the MHY in 2013.<sup>42</sup>
- (7) Xu Xianming, the President of Shangdong University presents a Certificate of Honorary Professor to the MHY in 2013.<sup>43</sup>
- (8) Co-organized by Phoenix TV and over ten Chinese media companies across the Strait and the Three Regions, the 2012-2013 the "World is Beautiful Because of You –Most Influential Chinese People" ceremony awards MHY with the Lifetime Achievement Award for World's Most Influential Chinese.<sup>44</sup>
- (9) The Venerable Master Yun Public Education Trust Fund.

In 2008, the MHY established a public education trust fund with royalties from his books. This fund has since given out various awards in culture and education. Thus, the MHY has decided to establish the "*Truthful, Virtuous and Beautiful Media Award*" to reward Chinese Journalists who abide by their principles in purifying humans and bettering society, and also those who endeavor to nurture good journalists in and out of Taiwan. The award has been handed out for five consecutive years. In 2010, he introduced the "*Hsing Yun Global Chinese Literature Award*" during the Centennial of the Republic of China to award outstanding global Chinese writers in contemporary literature, and those who have contributed to literature. In 2011, based on the belief that one's actions can change the future, and that true power comes from real actions, the fund initiated the "*Three Acts of Goodness School Award*" designed as a part of school education, and harmonious campus atmosphere. Then this activity has been, as well as extended from schools to communities. After two years of implementation and presentation, 28 high schools and 44 junior high schools and secondary schools have been selected and awarded.

<sup>42</sup> Miao Kai ed., *Fo Fuang Shan: Our Report* (Kaoshiung: Life News Agency, 2013), 29.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

In 2012, the “*First Hsing Yun Education Award*” was handed out to encourage teachers who abide by their ideas, face adversities fearlessly, and continue to offer full dedication to inspiring their students to strive for the better.

## **V. International Dharma Propagating Activities**

For more than 65 years, close to 30,000 days of dharma propagation, MHY traveled across the bridges between the monastic and secular life, and either thinking, speaking, or practicing were about propagating Humanistic Buddhism, as well as the ideas of the Three Acts of Goodness, the Four Giving, and the Five Harmonies. All of these are based on one idea, “For all who come from the ten directions, and all who go back to the ten directions, together, may we accomplish tasks that benefit people from all directions. For the giving from countless people, and bestowment from countless people, may connections be established between these countless people?” The MHY has indeed engaged in uncountable dhamma talks and speeches all over the world, the most recently worthy of remark are as listed:

- (1) On September 2012, MHY was invited to give a speech on “The Value of Faith” at the World Economic Forum 2012 Summer Davos held at the Tianjin Meijiang Convention Center in China. This was first time in the history of the Forum that a religious leader was invited to speak.
- (2) On April 2013, MHY was invited to a dialogue with Liu Changle, Phoenix TV Chairman, on “The Strength of Honesty and Integrity” at the Boao Forum for Asia.
- (3) On October 2004, the China, Japan, and Korea Friendly Exchanges were held in Beijing with representatives from both sides of the Strait and Three Regions. On 20<sup>th</sup> October, 1975, the Venerable Master Hsing Yun held a three day Dharma lecture inside the National Taiwan Arts Center, and became the first Buddhist to ever lecture on the Dharma inside national halls. After that, MHY, continued to lecture for forty years in front of an audience who has continued listened.
- (4) In 1987, the MHY was invited to speak at the Sha Tin Town Hall and Henry G. Leong Yaumatei Community Centre, and thereby began to propagate the Dharma on the international stage. In 1989, “The Shore, Other Shore Dharma Gathering” was held inside the Hong Kong Coliseum. Thus, MHY delivered 30 years of Dharma Propagation in HK.
- (5) In 2012, the Malaysian Buddhist group of the FGS organized the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Venerable Master’s Dharma Propagation works. To celebrate this, on 24<sup>th</sup> November, the four major Chinese media stations, along with the BLIA members, and Buddhist circles came together and

held the Buddhist Cultural and Dharma Blessing Function where the Triple Gem Refuge and the Five Percepts Ceremony were presided by the MHY.

- (6) In 1980, The MHY was appointed Dean of the Institute of Indian Cultural Studies at the Chinese Cultural University. In 1982, he was invited at the Tunghai University to speak on religious and spiritual contribution for world peace. To date, he has given lectures at over thirty renowned universities across the world.

## VI. International Buddhist *Sangha* and education

We are told that “the establishment of Fo Guang Shan is basically meant for the spread of education.” When the Grand Master first arrived in Taiwan, he just started the Taiwan Buddhist Training Institute. He then realized that the educational level of Taiwan’s monks and nuns was generally quite low. As he was coming from an ancient monastery in China, he could see that “Buddhism needed young people and young people needed Buddhism.”

MHY has built an International Buddhist *Sangha*, with about 1250 immediate disciples (including the monastic of monks, nuns, and lay disciples of ‘*shi gu*’ and ‘*Jai shi*’). All disciples have received guidance from the MHY. Consequently, over 300 branches of the FGS (including Taiwan and overseas branches) were founded around the world. The majority of the *Sangha* members came from Taiwan however there are about 30% of the *Sangha* members from other countries around the world. Moreover, MHY has created an incredible woman spiritual power in the *Sangha*, and there are more than thousand bhikkhunis who gave their life-long service under his supervision. The equality between male and female has been fulfilled in Fo Guang Shan. They support education and leadership opportunities. He has worked to improve the status in Taiwan and has taken steps to make it a global phenomenon.

According to Yi Fa, “Over the course of the last thirty years, as Buddhism in Taiwan has flourished, nuns have overtaken monks in number-at times exceeding a ratio of four to one. Besides, outnumbering monks, nuns also compete with their male counterparts for positions for position of leadership.”<sup>45</sup>

Among the thousands of bhikkhuni, Ven.Tzu Hui, has been a special assistant for MHY for over six decades, she has been engaged in the cause of education, culture in society and *Sangha* affairs, and involved in many activities in education. She organized more than fifty international academic conferences,

<sup>45</sup> Yi Fa, “Roar of the Lioness: A Women’s Revival in Humanistic Buddhism- A Case Study of Fo Guang Shan,” (paper presented at the International Conference on Humanistic

inviting scholars from the USA, Britain, Japan, Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, Mainland China and other countries to raise the level of academics and promote research on Humanistic Buddhism throughout the world. The Center for the Study of Humanistic Buddhism was cofounded by the Chinese University, Hong Kong and the Fo Guang Shan Foundation for Buddhist Culture and Education in 2005. Over the past 9 years, the center annually hosted both the Young Scholars Symposium of Buddhist Studies and the Cross-Strait Four Regions Conference. Again, it took great efforts, for the FGS Academy Research of Humanistic Buddhism to be founded, and for the FGS Monastery, to coordinate with the Nan Jing University in 2012.

A dynamic and chief leader of the bhikkuni disciple, Ven. Chueh Pei, a Chinese living in Argentina, decided to take ordination under Master Hsing Yun in her first meeting with him. She has experienced that “Fo Guang Shan is a Buddhist temple where people are busy with teaching the Dharma and feel joy from helping others.” She felt that she has become a monastic at a right temple. According to her, MHY is an educator because of his lifelong involvement in education. He has a forgiving personality and democratic ways to deal with all sentient beings. He loves all life forms as he loves himself. He never puts strict demands on others, although he received a strict, traditional Buddhist school education. He uses objective ideas to resolve the disciples’ problems and offers good advice to them. He cares about spiritual and religious discipline, not just the formality of it.<sup>46</sup> Another excellent bhikhuni disciple, named Man Ho, has also been interviewed and felt the same as Chueh Pei did. Both felt overjoyed after speaking with their Mentor. After graduating from the National Taiwan University, Taiwan, Man Ho worked in a trading company and the Civil Aeronautics Administration, and had also worked as an English substitute teacher. During that time, in 1987, Master Hsing Yun was building the His Lai Temple in the U.S. and so she helped her Mentor communicate in English by being his interpreter.<sup>47</sup>

As recorded in his book *A Journey Aboard* after visiting some countries of Southern Asia in 1963 and seeing great temple complexes, he became worried that “Everyone is so busy building Dharma centers, and one temple after another is being completed and dedicated, but who is going to run the Dharma centers a hundred years from now?” Building Dharma centers is not an easy task, but keeping them going in the future is much harder. What Buddhism today lacks most of all, is a young *Sangha*. He was aware that a monastic *Sangha* should be

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Buddhism, organized by His Lai University Los Angeles County, California USA, at Taipei International Convention Center, on October 18, 2001).

<sup>46</sup> Wu Jie, “The Honorary Doctorate of Life: Venerable Master Hsing Yun,” in *Taiwan Zan!*, trans. Deborah Lu (Taipei:2012), 26-7.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 31.

placed as a preliminary step in order to restore the fate of Buddhism in modern times.

We are informed that “Foster talent through education” is one of the Fo Guang Shan’s four main objectives in developing Buddhist talents to help spread Buddhism, since the establishment of Fo Guang Shan in 1967. The first residence building of the Eastern Buddhist College was established in 1968.

“Education is considered as foremost for the development of Buddhism.” This idea appeared in the heart of the Grand Master at very beginning of time, and he devoted his entire life to this job. He was educated in a complete Chan (Zen) School, which strictly emphasizes education. He derived his lineage from the 48<sup>th</sup> Patriarch, Lin Ji School, which emphasized the relationship between teacher and student, and the style of teaching known as ‘stick and shouting’. A teacher, who educates, should depend on the nature and character of his students. On the other hand, students must accept all kinds of education from the teacher. Instead of a loving style, the Grand Master, nevertheless, received a harsh style of teaching and discipline from his teacher, Master Zhi Kai. “Today, in order to develop a lasting Buddhism in the world, the first and most significant matter is to nourish the younger talent. Vowing to carry Tathagata’s noble work as our own duty, regardless of all types of hardship, we should never stop to undertake the Buddhist education.” Hence, the MHY has devoted his life to education, thus paving a bright path for Buddhism and humanity.

MHY was a principal at Bai-ta Junior School at age of 21. Due to this, his educational ideas are not a narrow circle in the Buddhist Sangha only but his vision is also open for the whole society. The Grand Master says that “The Sangha must have an education for the Sangha; devotees must have an education for the devotees; and children and women as well must also have an education that is suitable for children and women.” This is the idea that had led Fo Guang Shan to develop its educational mission. Undertaking this great idea, the Grand Master, however, made a complete educational system for both the *Sangha* and the devotees. Zhao Puchu (1907-2000), former chair of the Buddhist Association of China, once said, “the most important matters for Buddhism are threefold: the first, fostering talent; the second, fostering talent, and the efforts at fostering talent.” Great minds think alike, and Fo Guang Shan’s efforts at foresting talent within the Sangha over the past forty years have never ceased.

Education was extremely important for MHY from the beginning of the FGS Monastery, over 65 years ago. Thus MHY created a systematic and complete education under the FGS Monastery. The educational system is categorized into Monastic education and Secular education. In this presentation, the writer wants merely to highlight the features of the monastic education and especially focus on

its international position in accordance with the theme “Buddhism and globalization”.

As far as the Monastic education is concerned, four main streams of education will be discussed down below:

*(1) FGS TSUNG LIN UNIVERSITY- basic Buddhist training and study*

There are over 700 students attending the FGS TSUNG LIN University with 16 campuses in Taiwan and around the world. In Taiwan, the University is currently divided into institution of Chinese Buddhist Studies and International Department of Buddhist Studies (English and Japanese Buddhist College (1986) and the Chinese Program for International Students, 1992), Eastern Buddhist School, the Undergraduate Department of Buddhist College, Men’s Buddhist College, Women’s Buddhist College, Keelung Buddhist College etc.

It may be worth mentioning that many Buddhist scholars from Europe, Asia, and USA have been invited to teach since the establishment of the English Buddhist College 20 years ago. And again, besides improving their English, students there are required to learn how to propagate the dharma in English. Sometimes, there are exchange programs, students may come from Sri Lanka, America, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Canada, Thailand, Singapore, Philippine, Korea, and Japan. It is remarkable that Chinese Buddhism is expanding globally. Apart from this, International Department of Buddhist Studies was established for foreign students in their primary study of Chinese Buddhism. Mostly foreign students were selected for this from branches of the FGS Buddhist Colleges in India, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Africa, Australia, and some few were from Singapore, Nepal, Thailand, Cambodia, Indonesia, or Korea.

As analysis of its characteristics by Fu Zhiing, a Chinese writer describes five points of view as following:

- It has been in operation the longest without interruption.
- It has the highest number of continuing students, and it has the highest rate of people engaging in actual Buddhist –oriented work of various kinds after graduation.
- Its quality is the highest and it offers the most opportunities for further study.
- It has the highest level of internationalization.
- It combines traditional spirit with a modern look.<sup>48</sup>

The system of education in these Universities is unlike the other worldly institutions. The MHY emphasizes on critical thinking, Buddhist philosophy and

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<sup>48</sup> Fu Zhiying, *Bright Star Luminous Cloud*, 167.

life education, which is most important. Their education and development are based on the Grand Master's beliefs: "Living life is greater than knowledge; Morality is greater than fame; benefiting all is greater than the self; Self Realization is greater than mere acceptance."

A daily routine is designed for following a schedule, and is to be adjusted at all the branches of FGS Buddhist Institutes and abroad as well.

Early morning at 5:30 am all students wake up, then start morning chanting, and then have breakfast together in the dining hall. After that, they're cleaning their whole environment and from 8:00 am until 11:00 am they attend three classes, 11:30 -12:00 lunch, then 1.5 hours of break time. 1:30 pm until 4:30 continue with three more classes, there are again 2 hours for self -study but students have to maintain silence in the evening. After the evening chanting, students meditate and then take rest. Besides classes, there is also a scheduled community service period, time for studying the Buddhist canon, helping out in the kitchen, and so on. The purpose is to allow students to experience Buddhism by incorporating the learned concepts within their daily lives. This also emphasizes on the moral education of the students.

For each monastic member undertaking this, the daily disciplinary schedule is very essential, how could one define a moral and practice manner for them? What do you mean by saying that there is no practice in the FGS monastery? The concept of practice, is interpreted as such: a person should only engage in meditation and reciting or even retreat in remote areas, forests, etc.. The Grand Master, propounds a traditional mixed with a modern concept. He states that "at Fo Guang Shan, the facilities are its hardware, while Humanistic Buddhism is the Software." And he furthermore said: "My duty is to fill the world with cheers and joys; to attain peace and fulfillment for others. Buddha founded Buddhism for human beings, and hence, Dharma flowed naturally in this world. We have not purposely proposed Dharma to others, but we just give happiness, confidence, hope and convenience."

MHY believed that the principle of "fostering talent through education" can be completed by having a receptive and open attitude, though behaving with positive manners, practicing respect for life, stressing industriousness, emphasizing gratitude, teaching and instilling a strong belief in the dharma and fostering the cultivation of a stable personality. Richard L. Kimball, has given an overview of the methods of teaching. He found the FGS education system to be divided into two: much of the formal education is accomplished through the network of



temples, schools, colleges and universities; informal education is usually a part of monastic life and devotees “Living the Dharma”.<sup>49</sup>

*(2) Branches of FGS TSUNG LIN UNIVERISTY overseas*

The Grand Master, having a global vision, considered that the purpose of the Tsun Ling University, Koashiung, Taiwan, is to expand into international platforms. He established a number of Buddhist Institution around the world, where adults and citizens, are interested in Humanistic Buddhism and practice as well.

SEMINARY IN AFRICA (1994)

FGS DONG ZEN BUDDHIST COLLEGE, MALAYSIA (1996)

FGS BUDDHIST COLLEGE, NAN TIEN, AUSTRALIA (1996)

FGS BUDDHIST COLLEGE, INDIA (1999)

FGS BUDDHIST COLLEGE, HONG KONG (1999)

FGS BUDDHIST COLLEGE, BRAZIL (2004)

In 2004, the FGS BUDDHIST COLLEGE was established in Ru-Lai Temple, Brazil. It was the first Buddhist Institute in the Latin America.

*(3) Selected disciples sent abroad for advanced research*

The early stage of founding the Fo Guang Shan was a difficult time economically. Even so, the Grand Master with a fostering talent and prospective future, sent Tzu Hui, Tzu Jung, and Tzu Chia, Tzu Yi, and Tzu Chung, the earliest and chief disciples, to pursue advanced studies In Japan. When Fo Guang Shan entered its second decade, MHY considered globalization and kept on selecting his intelligent, promising disciples for further study abroad. Beside Japan, Korea, and Mainland China, India in Asia they were also sent to the USA, France, UK, Brazil, and South Africa. Those monks and researchers in different spheres of Buddhist Studies, have mastered Buddhist languages such as: Sanskrit, Pali, Tibetan, English, Japanese, French, Korean, and Portuguese etc. They all were awarded the highest degree of doctorate.

Today, these selected disciples represent “the pinnacle of well-balanced and outstanding monastics in the history of Chinese Buddhism” said by Fu Zhiing. (p. 213) As former chair of the FGS Monastery, Ven. Hsin Ting, received an honorary PhD from the Chulalongkorn University in Thailand (2005). He stated that he felt very fortunate to have been a monastic at Fo Guang Shan for the past thirty-eight

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<sup>49</sup> Richard L. Kimbal, “Educational Contribution of Fo Gaung Shan Humanistic Buddhism,” *His Lai Journal of Humanistic Buddhism* 4 (2003), 142-143.

years: “Having a Dharma center in the midst of a bustling place gives you a fortunate opportunity for enlightenment when adversity comes. Fo Guang Shan is the largest and best stage for cultivating merit and wisdom.”

Ven Yi Chun, who holds a teaching post at the University of Hong Kong, but also washed dishes at the Pilgrims Lodge in FGS just entered the order, as commended by Master Ven. Yi Fa, who obtained her doctorate from Yale University (1997). She remembered that “when I was studying at National Taiwan University, a certain professor also asked me whether I would chose to join the monastic order or continue with my studies. I said that the four years of college education was only a small part of my life, but joining the monastic order represented my life as a whole, and that was something worth pursuing.”

Dr. Yi Kong was the first college graduate to be ordained at Fo Guang Shan who went to Tokyo University for further study. At the time, the Grand Master accompanied her all the way to Japan and personally entrusted her to Prof. Mizuno. Since the Master also was concerned about Hui Kai's living conditions, he made a special trip to the Temple University in Philadelphia. MHY gave lectures at Hawaii University, and Yale University, also in Delhi University (India), in order to show his regards to his researcher disciples, Dr. Yi Fa, and the writer of this article (Chueming), were awarded Ph.D degrees, and served as assistant professors at the Nan Hua University, Chiayi, Taiwan. The MHY was many times a pilgrim to India in order to visit Yi Hua, who studied at the Santiniketan University, India. Dr. Yong Dong got his Ph. D degree from University of West, USA. Ven. Yi Yu then obtained a Ph.D from Japan, and served as the head of the Japanese language department at Yi Sho University, Taiwan. Ven. Hui Kai is now the Vice chancellor of the Nan Hua University, Taiwan. Dr. Yi Kong is a senior professor at Nan Hui University, and executive of board, of Nan Hua University and the University of West. Dr. Yong Dong is a lecturer at the University of West and the Fo Guang University, USA. Dr. Yongyou who got his PhD degree from London University, UK, is now an assistant professor at Nan Hui University. Dr. Jue Ji obtained his Ph.D degree from Hong Kong University and now is a lecturer at the University of West, USA. Ven. Chueh Wen received his Ph.D from the University of West, and worked at Nan Tien University, Sydney, Austria.

The Grand Master sent a number of disciples to mainland China for their further research on Chinese Buddhism, such as for a Ph. D degree, as Dr. Miao Ji at the Si Chung University, Dr. Jue Min at Lan Zho University. Ven. Jue Dou after obtaining his Ph.D from the Rin Min University, then serviced at the FGS International team, and Dr. Man Ting was awarded his PhD from the Sa Men University is now working as a lecturer at the Fo Guang University. Dr. Chueh Guan, got his Ph.D at the Fu Dan University, and now is a lecturer at the Fo Guang University. There are some disciples still undertaking Ph.D courses at

different Universities, such as: Dr. Man Shen at Nan Jing University. Ven. Juefang at Pai Jing University, and Ven. Hui Gu at Hong Kong University. Now, 197 disciples are completing their higher research programs in Taiwan and abroad. Among them, 30 disciples were awarded Ph. D degrees, and 167 disciples obtained Master degrees. The majority these disciples are doing religious or Buddhism studies, however, some of them also undertake other subjects, such as: History, Literature, Sociology, Education, Management, Art, Finances, etc. After the completion of a course, they are engaged in their sphere of work, and are appointed as lecturers, research project coordinators or as abbots, or they are doing administrative work in branches of the FGS Universities, or High, and Junior Schools, while some are doing editing work. As a Chinese saying goes, “It takes ten years to grow a tree and one hundred years to grow a generation of good people.” It is because of this vision that MHY has created a modernized Buddhist army, the one thousand and more pillars of Buddhism who can carry on the *Tathagata* legacy. Buddha’s light shines everywhere.

#### **VII. Dynamic disciples as chair persons leading IBPS FGS branches**

Aiming to be “a global citizen who embraces all living beings”, the Grand Master sets foot on all Five Continents of the World ever year. In 1957, at the age of 30, the MHY wrote an article for *Awakening the World Periodical*. The article was titled “A Plan for Worldwide Propagation”. 1965 was declared by the United Nations as the “Year of Development,” and the Grand Master also made a keynote speech called ‘*Self-awareness and Practicing Buddha’s Way*’ at the 10<sup>th</sup> BLIA General Conference. In his speech the MHY emphasized an important idea regarding the propagation of Human Buddhism to globalization. The Grand Master pointed out the ‘Development of Buddhism through localization’.<sup>50</sup> He said: “We are a ‘Global Village’. We must respect the cultures of other countries and societies and accept the unique characteristics of these cultures. There are differences between practicing in secluded monasteries and practicing Humanistic Buddhism in the society. So the local adaptation that I am advocating is benefiting, friendly, harmonious and enhancing. It does not involve rejection and denial.” Furthermore, the Grand Master indicated that “In the course of propagating Buddhism that started almost twenty five hundred years ago, the fundamental nature, principles, rules and instructions of the Dharma have never changed. However when Buddhism was transmitted to Sri Lanka, Burma and Thailand it became Theravada Buddhism. Similarly when it was transmitted to Xinjiang, Tibet and Mongolia, it

became Tantric Buddhism. Each of these forms of Buddhism has evolved into its current state through the gradual influence of the local climates, geographic conditions, customs, needs, and traditions.” He also stated that: “To be successful in the international development of Buddhism, we must ensure the rigorous implementation of the principle of local adaptation.” Therefore, during the 3<sup>rd</sup> BLIA Director Conference held in Johannesburg South Africa on the 19<sup>th</sup> of April 2001, he had proposed ‘Four Transformations’ in the agenda, as follows:

- (1) To humanize Buddhism,
- (2) To culturally improve our lives,
- (3) To install equality in the monastic and lay societies, and
- (4) To promote local adaptation of monastic establishments.

When the Grand Master proposed ‘the local adaptation of monastic establishments,’ he was referring to the hundreds of Buddhist centers founded and operated by Fo Guang Shan and BLIA. Their ownerships belongs to the community and not to individuals. He sincerely visualized what a spectacular achievement for Buddhism it will be if we are able to install at all of the overseas temples abbots or abbesses of native origin in the coming twenty or thirty years. He most wished that these would be able to assist and guide the native monastics responsible for the management and administration of these overseas establishments.

### VIII. Leading with system

In order to realize the ideal of a Humanistic Buddhist community, the FGS Board of Directors was founded with a complete set of bylaws that includes a leadership structure, authority, and rules of election for these members. In 1990, the first meeting was held to elect the 1<sup>st</sup> board of 9 members. Fo Guang Shan’s head abbot was appointed chairperson, setting an unprecedented example in the history of Chinese Buddhism in leadership by constitution, and letting the public elect their abbot. Having a new abbot symbolizes the continuation of the dharma lineage. One way of keeping up with times is to promote and support your subordinates, which is also the way to keep the Order in a sustainable development. In 1985, MHY stepped down as the Head Abbot of Fo Guang Shan, and passed the position to Ven. Abbot Hsin Ping, who became the 49th Patriarch of the Linji School, and also served as the 4th term Head Abbot of the Fo Guang Shan. This action established a democratic system and provided a good exchange of

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<sup>50</sup> Venerable Master Hsing Yun, “Self-awareness and Practicing the Buddha’s Way,” in *Modern Thoughts, Wise Mentality*, trans. Ven. Miao Hsi and Amy Lam et al. (Taiwan: Gandha Samudra Cultural Company, 2006), 250-60.

alternating generations. This was also the first branching of the Qixia Lineage and an unprecedented case for abbots of monasteries in Taiwan to serve for a set term. In 1995, Ven. Hsin Ting succeeded Ven. Hsin Ping, and served the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> terms as Head Abbot. In 2005, Ven. Hsin Pei served the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> term as Fo Guang Shan's Head Abbot. He was then succeeded by Ven. Hsin Bao as the 9<sup>th</sup> Head Abbot in 2013. Moreover, in 2013, the MHY transmitted the symbols of Dharma lineage: chanting beads, a dharma scroll, and a kasaya to 72 disciples of the 49<sup>th</sup> generation Linji School.

In addition to this, in 1997, the Fo Guang Shan Ten-Thousand Buddha Triple Platform Full Ordination Ceremony was titled an exemplar ordination ceremony for its precise execution of ceremonies and disciplinary trainings. In the 30 years that followed, full ordination ceremonies were also held in the USA, India, and Austria.

MHY, was not only following the Buddhist tradition, but also innovated, creating a systematic and democracy management for the purpose of embracing the whole of Buddhism and the continuation of a good model for the monastic community for the future. Anyone who identifies with Fo Guang Shan's principles, regardless of their background can come together to propagate it. The MHY stressed that all monastic members must follow the Fo Guang Shan tradition, inherit its principles, introduce new ideas and initiate the bodhicitta to propagate the Dharma.<sup>51</sup>

## **IX. Global connection and Interfaith with other religious leadership**

MHY spent his life promoting the concepts of respect, tolerance and harmony. For this purpose, he travels the world and actively participates in religious exchanges. An analysis of the Grand Master's diaries shows that during the construction period of FGS's branches and the establishment of BLIA Chapters around the world, the distance he travels annually equals that of two and a half trips around the globe, or an average of 160 kilometers per day. Some international conferences organized under his leadership include the World Tantric and Sutric Buddhist Conference, the International Sangha Seminar, the International Buddhist Youth Conference, and the International Buddhist women's Conference. He also met with many religious leaders such as Ven. Dr. Sri Dharmananda-Maha Nayaka Thera, Pope John Paul II, the Dalai Lama, the Prime Minister of Malaysia-Mahathir Mohamad, and representatives from Taoist, Christian churches as well as

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<sup>51</sup> *Fo Guang Shan: Our Report* (Kaohsiung: Life News Agency), 24-25

other religious organizations. By crossing the boundaries of religion, sect, and tradition, he brings the world one step closer to world peace and harmony.<sup>52</sup>

In order to restore the Bhikshuni Precepts in the Theravada tradition, the MHY brought the Full Ordination Ceremony to Bodhgaya, India in 1998.

On the basis of the Global concept, he suggested the urgent training of English-speaking talents, making the beginning of Internationalization for the Chinese Buddhism. The abbots of the branches appointed by the Grand Master, as chairpersons, are supposed to handle all dhammas affairs and cultural activities during the period of their appointment. The majority of abbots of the overseas branches are Taiwanese citizen, but also foreign disciples. Those disciples are fluent in multiple languages and demonstrate intelligent and dynamic leadership. They strictly follow the ideal of the MHY: to propagate Humanistic Buddhism, for localization and for globalization. In order to start the overseas branches and to show his world view, the MHY first named each of the branches around the world 'International Buddhist Progress Society' (I.B.P.S.). Additionally, the Grand Master instructs the direction of the Fo Guang Shan Development with four points of view:

- (1) Harmonize traditional teachings with modern practices.
- (2) Joint management by the Sangha and lay disciples.
- (3) Emphasize cultivation and learning.
- (4) Combine Buddhism with art.

As mentioned above, over 300 branches of FGS were established: 150 branches in Taiwan, and 150 branches overseas in major cities around the world. All branches of the FGS, including his contribution, history, and pictures and activities are published, in the "*Fo Guang Shan Monastery and Branch Temple*" volume 8 of the series "*Fo Guang Shan 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition*" (10 volumes in total).

(1) U.S.A.

Two decades after the establishment of the FGS Monastery (Kaohsiung, Taiwan), the first overseas branch, the Hsi Lai Temple, Los Angeles, USA, was inaugurated in 1988. It was considered as the most significant milestone starting the Internationalization of Chinese Buddhism. It was regarded as the largest Buddhist monastery in the Western Hemisphere. Chinese Buddhism expanded into the Western world. Since then, the Hsi Lai Temple served as an International and multi-function Buddhist cultural center. It plays three functions: (1) it is a center

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<sup>52</sup> "A brief Biography of Venerable Master Hsing Yun," in *Keeping Busy is the Best Nourishment* (Taiwan: Foguang Cultural Enterprise, 2002), vii.

that provides spiritual and cultural services, (2) it is a place for westerns to learn Buddhism, and (3) it promotes exchanges between the Eastern and Western cultures. In 1992, the Grand Master established the BLIA, Hsi Lai Temple as the World Head Quarters. In 1996, he established the FGS International Translation Center to recruit translators for Buddhist text translation. Books are published in more than ten languages including Portuguese, Spanish, French, German, Russian, Ukrainian, Thai, Indonesian, Sinhalese, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese. After the Hsi Lai Temple, more than 20 branches were gradually established in different states of the United States of America: the IBPS South Bay (CA), the Hsi Fang Temple (San Diego Buddhist Association, CA), the Sam Bao Temple (American Buddhist Cultural Society), the American Buddhist Cultural Society (Fremont, CA), the Light of Buddha Temple (Oakland, CA), the Lian Hua Temple (Nevada Buddhist Association, NV), the International Buddhist Association of Arizona (AZ), the Denver Buddhist Cultural Society (Denver, CO), the Chung Mei Buddhist Temple (IBPS Huston, TX), the IBPS Dallas (TX), the Xiang Yun Temple (IBPS Austin, TX), the Fo Guang Shan St. Louis Buddhist Center (MO), in Chicago (IL), the Greater Boston Buddhist Cultural Center (MA), the IBPS New York (NY), the IBPS Deer Park (NY), the New Jersey Buddhist Cultural Center (NJ), the IBPS North Carolina (NC), the IBPS Miami (FL), the Hawaii Buddhist Cultural Society (HI), and the Fo Guang Shan Guam.

In 1994, the Grand Master started the first branch in Vancouver, Canada, the Vancouver IBPS. Later on, more branches were established in Edmonton, Toronto, Ottawa, Carleton, Montreal, and Costa Rica.

### *(2) South America*

In 1992, the IBPS Templo do Brasil (Zu Lai Temple) was established in the capital city Sao Paulo. Nearly 400 homeless children were adopted in this temple; they were named as 'The Sons of Fo Guang'. Other dhamma centers were established in Paraguay, Argentina, Chile, Rio De Janeiro, etc.

### *(3) Europe*

The Grand Master believes that Buddhism combined with the local history, culture, customs and habits is still very attractive and interesting to the whole world. In 1991, the FGS established its first branch in Paris, France. Afterwards, various IBPS branches were established in London (UK), Manchester (UK), Holland, Sweden, Berlin, Frankfurt, Belgium, Switzerland, Vienna (Austria), Portugal, and Spain.

*(4) Oceania*

In 1995, the Nan Tien Temple was established in Sydney. It developed as leaps in the Southern Paradise. Then more temples were established: the IBAA Parramatta, the Chung Tien Temple in Brisbane, and the FGS New Zealand.

*(5) Africa: Nan Hua Temple in South Africa.*

*(6) Asia:* FGS Tokyo, Motosu, Japan; the Dong Chan Temple, Malaysia; the Fo Guang Shan Singapore, etc. In India, in order to restore Buddhism in the mother land of Buddhism, the Grand Master put a lot of efforts. From 1991 on, 12 Chapters of the BLIA were established, then the FGS Buddhist Center in Kolkata, in 1998, and the FGS Educational and Cultural Center in New Delhi, 2007.

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The MHY, in his life, has received many awards for Education, Culture, Charity and Social Education from the government of Taiwan. However, it's more significant to note that he won high regards abroad. In 1995, he was awarded the Buddha Ratna Award at the All India Buddhist Conference. Thailand's Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai awarded him a "Merit Medal for Great Contribution to Buddhism" at the 21<sup>st</sup> WFB General Conference in 2001. California and Houston have each conferred him Honorary Citizenship, once again proving Master's reputation around the world. The Grand Master has also been invited to conduct various religious ceremonies by the United States government.

While there are many sensitive and political issue between Mainland and Taiwan, the Grand Master has broken the barrier. The second World Buddhist Forum was jointly held by the Buddhist association of China , Buddha's Light International Association, and the Hong Kong Buddhist Association. The Chinese Religious Culture Communication Association was inaugurated in Wuxi, China, on March 28, 2009 and concluded in Taipei, Taiwan on April 1, 2009. Over a thousand guests that included scholars, dharma protectors, and Buddhist leaders from nearly sixty countries and regions in Asia, Europe, Oceania, America, and Africa were invited to the forum. The World Buddhist Forum was established as a higher level platform for global Buddhists to communicate and collaborate. The forum also provides a distinctive junction for international Buddhist interactions.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> 2009 Review of Buddha's Light International Association World Headquarters, ed. Ven. Miao Hsi and Louvenia Ortega (USA: BLIA World Headquarters, 2009), 110.



## Conclusion

From the above brief explanations, which are related to the propagation of Humanistic Buddhism by the MHY, we can say that Fo Guang Shan propagates Buddhism using multi-dimensional ideas: social, cultural, religious, educational, linguistic and so on. The result of the propagation of the Humanistic Buddhism has provided a radical help to the development of Buddha's teaching with respect to the Buddhist literature, Buddhist culture and traditions and the monastic life in Taiwan and all over the world. In the keynote speech given at the 11<sup>th</sup> BLIA General Conference in Taipei, Taiwan, MHY expressed that "For Buddhism's sake, I have dedicated my whole life to "Changing the World" and "Benefiting Humanity," because these are the true meanings Buddhism.

At that time, MHY had proposed four suggestions to all members:

1. Change the World and Benefit Humanity by Self-Awareness and Integrity.
2. Change the World and Benefit Humanity by Resolve and Energy.
3. Change the World and Benefit Humanity by Participation and Involvement.
4. Change the World and Benefit Humanity by Bodhi Wisdom and the Power of Vows.<sup>54</sup>

"MHY has profound implications for the Chinese Culture and world culture, and he is not only a reformer, but also a true founder", said veteran journalist Lu Keng.<sup>55</sup> The writer will contribute with some aspects to observe on the religious mission of MHY, as mentioned below:

1. **Transcending boundaries:** Humanistic Buddhism is of great relevance to the contemporary society and the modern civilization of the world. MHY has undertaken the action of reforming Buddhism. Buddhism is not a kind of ideology, which embraces theology and textual concepts, rather, he proclaims that Buddhism must also gradually overcome its traditional ways of doing things by coming out of the forest and joining society. It must expand the functions of the temple by entering into community service; reaching to families and the nation, and then transcending national boundaries; it must spread around the world. MHY said, "We are promoting harmony for the human race when we develop modern cultural ideals" "Harmony is a necessary part of our world today. Thus, there should not be any discrimination between countries, different ethnic origins, different communities, all sectors of society, and political parties.
2. **Driving the new engineering of Buddhists:** on a broader scale, MHY has transmitted his idea to engage all monastics and lay devotees in activities that would help and benefit living beings. The socially engaged Buddhism is today,

<sup>54</sup> Hsing Yun, *The Essence of Humanistic Buddhism*, 148.

<sup>55</sup> Fu Zhiying, *Bright Star Luminous Cloud*, 12.

very much applicable and necessary to the society for its developments from agriculture to industry, from travel services to hospice care, from charity to culture and education. MHY has made sustained efforts to promote Humanistic Buddhism, to change conservative thoughts, and to establish all kinds of Buddhist activities under a well-structured plan, in order to benefit society. The Buddhists have been suggested to do a variety of activities, in the areas of : Culture, Education, Social welfare, service industry, and as well as industry in general and the business sector. A Buddhist is certainly encouraged to take part in any undertaking or career that helps change the world and benefit humanity, while being able to contribute to the well-being of the country, its people, society, economic prosperity, and also bringing happiness to the general public.<sup>56</sup>

3. **Be tolerating of Diversity:** MHY has expanded the idea of Humanistic Buddhism from Asian Countries into Non-Asian countries. Today, Buddhism remains fresh and strong as its influences spreads ever farther. Evidently, Buddhism has been enhanced by the power of tolerance of diversity without divisions.
4. **Be relevant to the contemporary issues:** In 2010, MHY, advocated the preserving of the ecological system and relying on everyone's concerted support. To advocate Environmental Preservation and Spiritual Preservation, a Ceremony was organized in 1992 at Fo Guang Shan. He contributed the principle of twelve guidance, in which one can practice the preservation of body and mind.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Hsing Yun, *The Essence of Humanistic Buddhism*, 160-162.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 211.

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