

## **Master Hsing Yun: The Pioneering Practitioner of Contemporary Humanistic Buddhism (1927 – 2023)**



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**ABSTRACT:** Master Hsing Yun founded Fo Guang Shan in 1965, dedicated to promoting Humanistic Buddhism. Master Hsing Yun is known for his simple and down-to-earth teachings, as well as his efforts to bring Buddhism to the masses through modern communication technology and community service initiatives. He has made significant contributions to the development and popularization of Humanistic Buddhism through his teachings, writings, and community service initiatives. Master Hsing Yun passed away on February 5, 2023 in Fo Guang Shan, Taiwan. He said in his last words, "The best memory for me is to practice Humanistic Buddhism. I hope that everyone will be diligent in Humanistic Buddhism and establish a pure land on earth." Master Hsing Yun is the pioneering practitioner of contemporary Humanistic Buddhism. We must continue to uphold Master Hsing Yun's beliefs and promote Humanistic Buddhism.

**KEYWORDS:** Humanistic Buddhism, Master Hsing Yun, Shakyamuni Buddha, Fo Guang Shan, BILA

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Master Hsing Yun was born in Jiangdu, Jiangsu Province, Mainland China on April 27, 1927 after World War I. At the age of 12, he became a monk, Wuche is his dharma name, in Qixiashan Temple in Nanjing City, Mainland China. He entered Jiaoshan Buddhist College in Jiangsu Province, Mainland China in 1945. During the civil war of China, he came to Taiwan from Jiangsu Province in the spring of 1949, and joined the Taiwan Buddhist Academy, which founded by Venerable Cihang and become a learning monk. He founded Fo Guang Shan in 1965, dedicated to promoting Humanistic Buddhism. Master Hsing Yun is known for his simple and down-to-earth teachings, as well as his efforts to bring Buddhism to the masses through modern communication technology and community service initiatives. He has made significant contributions to the development and popularization of Humanistic Buddhism through his teachings, writings, and community service initiatives (Fo Guang Shan, 2023).

Master Hsing Yun passed away on February 5, 2023 in Fo Guang Shan, Taiwan. I went to Fo Guang Shan to offer my condolences on February 6, 2023, and I was grateful for Master Hsing Yun's righteous faith, righteous knowledge, and righteous views. He has promoted the harmonious development of humanistic Buddhism and society throughout his life, and is a model for the Buddhist circles in the world. I simply pay my tribute to Master Hsing Yun's outstanding contribution to Buddhism by this article.

### **II. FOUR GIVING**

Master Hsing Yun set "Four Giving" as the work creed of Fo Guang Buddhist believers: (1) Giving people confidence, (2) Giving people joy, (3) Giving people hope, and (4) Giving people convenience. Firstly, Faith is the source of human strength. With confidence in everything, even the most difficult things can be solved. We might as well give others more care and praise, which are the "three good things" and say good things in terms of dealing with others. This can increase the confidence of others, and also can form good karma. Secondly, the heart of joy is the root of health and happiness. Sentient beings with a heart of joy can make everyone around them feel "like a spring breeze" of joy. Master Hsing Yun believes that everyone deserves our sincere greetings to make him happy. He vowed to fill the world with joy and make it a happy world.

Thirdly, he vows made by Buddha are all based on the hope given to all sentient beings. For instance: Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva said: "The hell is not empty, and I vow not to become a Buddha." Master Hsing Yun said: If there is Buddhism, there will be a way. This is to give hope for all sentient beings. Sentient beings have the motivation to take action only as they have hope. Therefore, they may achieve the three Goods: "Do good deeds, Speak good words, Think good thoughts" and life will have hope. You can go around the Buddha Memorial Hall along the road around the hall, but most sentient beings will hesitate when they see the endless road, Master Hsing Yun said. He set up the "There is a way forward" indicator not only to reminding everyone to keep moving forward, but also told everyone that as long as life keeps moving forward, there will be hope.

## Master Hsing Yun: The Pioneering Practitioner of Contemporary Humanistic Buddhism (1927 – 2023)

Finally, Technology comes from human nature: making life more convenient! Convenience for others is convenience for you. "Giving" appears to be beneficial to others on the outside; however, it is essentially beneficial to oneself. Being able to "give" is actually a win-win manner. As long as you have kind thoughts in your heart and do good things to others to offer convenience; the world will be full of joy and hope, and you will also acquire good karmas on the way of pursuing Buddhism (Master Hsing Yun, 2017a).

Humanistic Buddhism is a movement in the evolution of Buddhism that emphasizes the application of Buddhist teachings to contemporary issues and the integration of Buddhist principles into everyday life. Humanistic Buddhism can be traced back to the teachings of the Buddha, who emphasized the importance of self-reliance, compassion and social responsibility. However, it germinated in the early 20th century, when Buddhism encountered new social and cultural challenges in Mainland China. One of the key figures in the development of Humanistic Buddhism in Mainland China was the Buddhist Master Taixu, who advocated the modernization and reform of Buddhism in the early 20th century. He was a visionary who sought to modernize and reform Buddhism to make it more relevant and accessible to the sentient beings of his time. He advocated the establishment of Buddhist universities, the use of modern technology to spread Humanistic Buddhism, and the integration of Buddhist values into secular society. Master Taixu also promoted the idea of a "World Federation of Buddhists" that would bring Buddhists from all over the world together to work towards a universal goal (Master Hsing Yun, 2016).

This concept stress on the realization of Buddhist values through practical actions, and combines Buddhist teachings with practical life. Humanistic Buddhism highlights serving the society and promoting human well-being as its main goal, and putting the spirit and morality of Buddhism into practice. Master Hsing Yun, the founder of the Fo Guang Shan in Taiwan, further developed this movement after World War II from Taiwan and spread all over the world (Fo Guang Shan, 2023)..

There are some similarities between Master Hsing Yun and Master Tai Xu in their advocacy of Humanistic Buddhism. Firstly, they all stress on the integration of Buddhism into daily life. Master Hsing Yun and Master Taixu believe that Buddhism should be intimately related to the lives of all sentient beings and can be used to congregate the challenges of modern society. Secondly, they all promote education and cultural exchanges. Master Hsing Yun and Master Tai Xu distinguish the consequence of education and cultural exchanges to promote Buddhist values and improve lives of sentient beings.

Master Hsing Yun founded several organizations, including: Fo Guang Shan (FGS) and the Buddha Light International Association (BLIA), two of the most famous Buddhist organizations in the world. Firstly, Fo Guang Shan (FGS) is located in Kaohsiung City, Taiwan in 1967. With the tenet of "promoting Buddhist culture and making the world pure and beautiful", Fo Guang Shan is committed to helping more sentient beings understand and benefit from Buddhism through activities such as Buddhist education, culture, social welfare, and medical care. Fo Guang Shan is one of the largest Buddhist organizations in the world, with branches all over the world. Fo Guang Shan (Fo Guang Shan) is a Chinese Buddhist Sangha founded by Venerable Xing Yun in 1967 and is one of the largest and most influential Buddhist organizations in the world. Fo Guang Shan is committed to promoting Buddhist values and making a constructive impact in the world. Through its many initiatives, it provides support and guidance to those seeking to deepen their understanding of Buddhism and improve their lives through the application of Buddhist teachings (Fo Guang Shan, 2023).

Secondly, the Buddha Light International Association (BLIA) is a global network of Buddhist organizations and individuals who follow the teachings of Master Hsing Yun. It was established in 1992 to promote Buddhist values, provide spiritual support, and engage in community service and cultural exchange. The members of BLIA came from various backgrounds and beliefs. They joined together to deepen their understanding of Buddhism and to improve their lives through the application of Buddhist teachings. BLIA offers a range of programs and resources to support the spiritual growth and well-being of its members, including Buddhist studies and meditation classes, retreats and workshops. Moreover, BLIA is also committed to making an affirmative impact on the world through community service and cultural exchange activities. For instance, BLIA members participate in disaster relief efforts, volunteer at homeless shelters, and participate in environmental conservation efforts, and so on. BLIA is an active and assorted organization that provides support and guidance to members and improves their lives through the application of Buddhist teachings. Through its many initiatives, BLIA strives to endorse peace, wisdom and compassion in the world (BILA, 2023).

Thirdly, the Fo Guang Shan Compassion Foundation is a non-profit organization established in Taiwan by the Fo Guang Shan. It's mission is to promote Buddhist values and practices, as well as to engage in charitable and humanitarian activities. The Foundation fulfills its mission through a variety of programs and initiatives, including educational and community service programs, disaster relief efforts, and cultural exchange events. In addition, the Foundation operates a number of facilities, including schools, hospitals, and cultural centers, to further its mission and meet the needs of the community. The Fo Guang Shan Charitable Foundation has been recognized for its commitment to promoting Buddhist values and its efforts to improve the lives of individuals and communities in Taiwan and around the world (Fo Guang Shan Compassion Foundation, 2023).

## **Master Hsing Yun: The Pioneering Practitioner of Contemporary Humanistic Buddhism (1927 – 2023)**

Fourthly, the Fo Guang Shan Buddha Museum contains various exhibits and displays that showcase the history and culture of Buddhism, in which the exhibits include historical artifacts, religious texts and multimedia displays that give visitors a deeper understanding of the life and teachings of the Buddha (Fo Guang Shan Buddha Museum, 2023).

Finally, Fo Guang Shan University Consortium includes: Fo Guang University (Taiwan), Nanhua University (Taiwan), The University of the West (USA), Nan Tian Institute (Australia) and Guang Ming College (Philippines). Master Hsing Yun once said that he has two responsibilities for running universities. First one is to prepare the foundation fund, and the second is to find excellent principals and let them do their best to run education well. He whole-heartedly runs universities with only one wish: "Leave wisdom to himself, leave the university to the society, leave merit to the children and grandchildren, and leave achievements to the public." The sharing of resources by the five universities will give full play to the greatest comprehensive effect of the contribution of millions of meritorious deeds (Fo Guang Shan University Consortium, 2018).

### **III. INSTITUTIONALIZATION, MODERNIZATION, HUMANIZATION AND INTERNATIONALIZATION**

Master Hsing Yun is committed to promoting the (1) institutionalization, (2) modernization, (3) humanization and (4) internationalization of Buddhism, and has achieved remarkable results. Particularly, it can be divided into 16 essentials. Firstly, "Buddhist institutionalization" refers to the process of systematization, normalization, and standardization of Buddhist organizations. This process contributed deeply to the development and spread of Buddhism, as it enabled Buddhism to be taught and spread within an organizational and systematic structure.

Buddhism needs organization because organization can enable Buddhism to exert its function and influence more successfully. Organization can promote the development and popularization of Buddhism, and make Buddhist teachings, teaching methods, and practice more clear to get together the needs of believers. Organization also helps to ensure the inheritance and stability of Buddhism, and enables Buddhism to better integrate with contemporary society to promote the spiritual and social progress of mankind. Additionally, organization can also make Buddhist charity, relief and cultural promotion more efficient and unified. Master Hsing Yun contributed significantly to the institutionalization of Buddhism. He successfully founded a large and global Buddhist organization: "Fo Guang Shan".

Secondly, "Buddhist modernization" refers to the process of integrating Buddhist ideas and practices with modern society to meet the needs of modern life. Buddhism needs modernization since the changes and needs of modern society from 20th century are different from those of the past. Buddhism needs to be integrated with contemporary society while retaining its traditional spirit. Master Hsing Yun endorse the concept of "Humanistic Buddhism", emphasizing that Buddhism is not only a religious belief, but also a way of life, with the three principles of equality, caring and peace as the core of its modernization. He also put forward a series of practical measures to make Buddhism more reasonable in contemporary society, such as establishing cultural and educational institutions, holding cultural and educational activities, and so on. Master Hsing Yun had been making Humanistic Buddhism a more equal, caring, and peaceful way of life to meet the needs of modern believers.

Thirdly, "Humanization of Buddhism" refers to a movement that popularizes Buddhist teachings and practice in the daily life of ordinary sentient beings, emphasizing spiritual practice and moral practice in ordinary life. Buddhism needs humanization because Buddhism believes that morality and practice should not only exist in monks or temples, but should be popularized in everyone's daily life. Humanistic Buddhism spreads Buddhist teachings and practice to the lives of ordinary sentient beings, emphasizing practice and moral practice in ordinary life; Jungle Buddhism focuses on the practice and moral life of monks, emphasizing the practice and meditation of secluded life.

Finally, "Buddhism Internationalization" refers to a movement to promote Buddhism to the world, so that sentient beings from different countries, cultures and races can understand and practice Buddhism. Master Hsing Yun actively promotes the internationalization of Buddhism, making Buddhist teachings and practice methods popular all over the world. He has founded many global Buddhist institutions, such as Buddhist universities, Buddhist TV stations, and Buddhist museums, which have popularized Buddhist knowledge and teachings and made more sentient beings understand Humanistic Buddhism. He has worked hard to promote cross-cultural and cross-religious communication and understanding, which plays an important role in promoting peace and progress in human society (Master Hsing Yun, 2017b).

### **IV. 16 ESSENTIALS**

The institutionalization, modernization, humanization, and internationalization of Buddhism promoted by Master Hsing Yun are specifically implemented in the following 16 essentials: Buddhism may change from (1) Tradition to Modernity, (2) Solitude to Mass, (3) Sanskrit to Chanting, (4) Consciousness to Career, (5) Regional to International, (6) Loose to Institutional, (7) Static to Dynamic, (8) forest to society, (9) Recluse to Salvation, (10) monk-only to Hexin, (11) Disciple to Lecturer, (12) monasteries to synagogues, (13) Sect to Respect, (14) doing good deeds to preaching, (15) puja to activity, and (16) old age to youth.

### 1. Buddhism may change from Tradition to Modernity

The reason for the transformation of Buddhism to modern times is mainly due to the changes in society, the advancement of technology, and the changes in sentient beings' lifestyles and values. In modern society, sentient beings need more practical religious beliefs. Traditional Buddhism often follows teachings and practices that have been passed down through the past hundreds of years, which may no longer suit the needs of modern sentient beings. Therefore, Buddhism needs to be adapted and adjusted to the demands of modern life. The differences between modern humanistic Buddhism and traditional Chinese Buddhism include:

1. Teachings: contemporary Humanistic Buddhism has updated and modernized interpretations of the teachings of traditional Chinese Buddhism to better respond to the needs of modern sentient beings.
2. Practice methods: contemporary Humanistic Buddhism has introduced more modern practice methods, such as psychotherapy, art, music, etc., to better connect modern sentient beings.
3. Education: contemporary Humanistic Buddhism has introduced more modern educational methods, such as computer teaching, online teaching, etc., to better impart Buddhist knowledge.

Overall, Humanistic Buddhism from Tradition to Modernity aims to make traditional Chinese Buddhism more adaptable and relevant in modern society, and to help more sentient beings understand and approach Buddhism.

Master Hsing Yun advocates "Buddhism from tradition to modernity" because he believes that traditional Chinese Buddhism can no longer meet the needs of modern sentient beings, and needs to be adapted and adjusted to meet the needs of modern life. He believes that Buddhism needs to be reformed and modernized so that Buddhism can continue to play a role in modern society and help sentient beings solve problems in modern life. This kind of initiative is Humanistic Buddhism, which not only has a positive impact on modern Buddhism, but also helps more sentient beings around the world understand and approach Buddhism, and has made great contributions to the development and popularization of Buddhism.

### 2. Buddhism may change from Solitude to Mass.

Buddhism spread from solitary to the masses since Buddhist teachings are considered to be applicable to all sentient beings, regardless of high or low, male or female, rich or poor. Mass communication can benefit more sentient beings and help strengthen the influence of Buddhism in society. During the solitary period, Buddhists were usually monks living in monasteries who specialized in spiritual practice. The major differences between popular Buddhism and solitary Buddhism are that the former focuses on the dissemination of Buddhist ideas to the general public, emphasizing that everyone can become a Buddha. This perception just like Mahayana Buddhism not only saves oneself but also saves others. However, solitary Buddhism stresses on strictness. The spiritual practice and meditation practice, focusing on inner practice, similar to the perception of Hinayana Buddhism.

Master Hsing Yun advocated "Buddhism from living alone to the public" because he believed that Buddhism should pay more attention to the needs of the society and the sentient beings, and help sentient beings solve problems by organizing community activities and performing public services. At the same time, he also emphasized that Buddhism should teach Buddhist knowledge and practical methods to the public by organizing popular activities, such as ashrams, meditation and education classes. Fo Guang Shan has hundreds of ashrams all over the world, which is the best practice.

### 3. Buddhism may change from Sanskrit to Chanting.

The shift in Buddhism from Sanskrit Buddhism to Singing Buddhism was due to the perception by many that Sanskrit Buddhism was difficult to understand and accept by the general public in contemporary world. Sanskrit is the script of ancient India, and it is not a living language that many sentient beings are familiar with, so it is not easy to spread Buddhist teachings to the public by using Sanskrit. Singing Buddhism is to spread Buddhist teachings in the form of songs and poems, which are more brilliant, straightforward to understand, and easier to attract the attention of the public. Simultaneously, it is more in line with the needs and lifestyles of contemporary sentient beings, and it is more contributing to the popularization of Buddhism.

Master Hsing Yun advocated "Buddhism from Sanskrit to singing" because he believed that contemporary Buddhism needs to be more adaptable to present society and be closer to the public. He promoted the use of songs and stories to spread Buddhism, making it easier to understand and accept. His encouragement is to let more sentient beings appreciate Buddhism and enlarge the influence of Buddhism in contemporary society. Fo Guang Shan has set up many Buddhist singing teams in its monasteries around the world, which is a demonstration of best practice.

### 4. Buddhism may change from Consciousness to Career.

Reading Sutra Buddhism mainly refers to the way of spreading Buddhism that focuses on the study and understanding of Buddhist classics while ignoring the attention and solutions to real social problems. Buddhist scriptures may be more suitable for a small number of Buddhist scholars and believers to focus on research, but for the general public, they need practical actions to care about the real world. Enterprise Buddhism emphasizes practicing Buddhist values through practical actions and careers, and

## **Master Hsing Yun: The Pioneering Practitioner of Contemporary Humanistic Buddhism (1927 – 2023)**

embodying Buddhist values by helping others and improving society. Relatively speaking, career Buddhism is more practical, pays more attention to real social problems, and is more conducive to spreading Buddhist teachings to the public.

Master Hsing Yun advocated "Buddhism from Reading Sutra to Enterprise" because he believed that traditional Buddhist scriptures focus on experience and knowledge, but lack practical actions. He believes that Buddhism should be reflected in daily life, helping others and improving society through practical actions. He founded Fo Guang Shan and the Buddha Light International Association (BLIA) is the best embodiment.

### **5. Buddhism may change from Regional to International.**

The shift in Buddhism from regional Buddhism to international Buddhism is due to many sentient beings' belief that Buddhism should not be confined to a certain region or country, such as East and South Asian countries, but should be spread and practiced around the world as a global religion. Regional Buddhism may be limited to a certain region or country, accentuating local culture and traditions, and may be not easy to spread to other regions or countries, such as North America and European Union. International Buddhism stresses on the internationality and universal applicability of Buddhism, pays attention to spreading Buddhist teachings to the world, and strives to bring Buddhist practice to diverse countries and regions. International Buddhism focuses on spreading the core values of Buddhism and seeking applicability in the context of different cultures and traditions.

Master Hsing Yun believes that Buddhism is not just a regional religion, but also has universal applicability and global value. Consequently, the "Buddhism from the region to the world" he advocated aims to emphasize the internationality and worldwide applicability of Buddhism, and transform Buddhism from a simply regional religion to a global religious belief.

### **6. Buddhism may change from Loose to Institutional.**

The change from disorganized to institutional was to make Buddhism more organized, efficient, and manageable. Scattered Buddhism is prone to lack of unified management and teaching, and it is difficult to ensure the consistency of information and the authenticity of beliefs. Institutional Buddhism ensures the consistency of information and the authenticity of beliefs through a sound organizational structure and institutional arrangements, improving teaching efficiency and management effects. Master Hsing Yun believed that Buddhism needs an organized and disciplined system to ensure its spread and development if we wish Buddhism to be a global religion. Scattered Buddhism may be difficult to achieve this goal. His success in founding Fo Guang Shan and the Buddha Light International Association (BLIA) will allow Buddhism to play a greater role in societies around the world.

### **7. Buddhism may change from Static to Dynamic.**

Static Buddhism may place too much weight on meditation and retreat, and not pay enough attention to real-life problems and practical needs. Alternatively, dynamic Buddhism focuses on applying Buddhist ideas and principles to daily life, integrating with real society, and paying more attention to sentient beings's actual needs. Master Hsing Yun advocates from static to dynamic Buddhism because static Buddhism tends to fall into a conservative and traditional situation, which is not conducive to adapting to contemporary society, expanding and promoting Buddhism. Conversely, dynamic Buddhism is more flexible and innovative, able to adapt to changes in contemporary society and approach believers, making more valuable contributions to contemporary society and promoting Buddhism. This is Humanistic Buddhism.

### **8. Buddhism may change from forest to society.**

Jungle Buddhism refers to the way of Buddhist practice in which monks live in jungles or remote areas, and are characterized by living in isolation and retreating in ancient China. This form of Buddhism is usually inhabited by a few monks who focus on practice and meditation, seeking liberation and wisdom in isolation. In Jungle Buddhism, monks habitually keep away from the outside world, live a simple life, and focus on spiritual practice and meditation to improve their mind and wisdom. In such an environment, they can practice wholeheartedly and thus reach the goal of liberation more quickly. When Shakyamuni Buddha was in India, he preached the Dharma among the crowd, not practicing alone in the jungle.

Master Hsing Yun advocates Buddhism from the mountains to the society because he believes that Buddhism should go out of the temple, enter the society, and serve the society. Buddhism should be integrated with society, solve practical problems for society, help sentient beings solve troubles in life, and promote human happiness and well-being. Most of Fo Guang Shan's ashrams are located in urban areas and close to the crowd is the best way to practice.

### **9. Buddhism may change from Recluse to Salvation.**

The reason for traditional Buddhist reclusiveness is that Buddhism emphasizes "transcendence", that is, to leave worldly troubles and greed, and pursue meditation and wisdom in order to achieve liberation and a peaceful state of mind. Recluse is not to escape from reality, but to have a deeper understanding and insight into the world and oneself through meditation and practice. The reason why modern Humanistic Buddhism wants to save the world is because Humanistic Buddhism focuses on contributing to society and improving the world through practical actions, rather than just staying in theory and meditation. Modern Humanistic Buddhism believes that a person can practice Buddhist values in secular life, and realize his own compassion and correct moral

## **Master Hsing Yun: The Pioneering Practitioner of Contemporary Humanistic Buddhism (1927 – 2023)**

values by helping others, protecting the environment, and eliminating social injustice. Therefore, modern Humanistic Buddhism emphasizes "salvation" to demonstrate Buddhism's concern and contribution to human beings and society.

Master Hsing Yun advocated the concept of Humanistic Buddhism from "escaping from the world" to "saving the world" because he believed that Buddhism can not only help sentient beings gain inner peace and eliminate troubles, but also play a greater role in society and help sentient beings through spiritual practice and practice. Solve practical problems in life. He established Fo Guang Shan and other organizations to move towards this goal.

### **10. Buddhism may change from monk-only to Hexin.**

"Only monks" refers to the Buddhist tradition, with monks as the main representatives, thus limiting the popularization of Buddhism. "Hexin" refers to Buddhism that is mainly believers, emphasizing the practice of values and lifestyles. This means that believers are no longer limited to participating in Buddhist rituals in temples, but to integrate into daily life to practice Buddhist beliefs. Master Hsing Yun believes that Buddhism should spread to more sentient beings and encourage believers to practice the value of Buddhism in secular life. He believes that through Buddhism "from monk-only to Hexin", Buddhism can be more closely linked with the lives of believers, making Buddhism more influential and popular.

Fo Guang Shan promotes Buddhism through the Buddha Light International Association (BLIA), mainly through the following methods:

1. Buddhist education: BLIA organizes various Buddhist courses, such as Buddhist courses, meditation courses, etc., to popularize Buddhist knowledge and skills.
2. Religious activities: BLIA organizes various religious activities, such as Dharma meetings and lectures on Buddhism, to enhance believers' religious beliefs.
3. International exchanges: BLIA organizes various international exchange activities, such as international Buddhist seminars, international exchange missions, etc., to promote exchanges and cooperation between different countries and cultures.
4. Publishing activities: BLIA publishes various Buddhist books, periodicals, audio and video, etc. to popularize Buddhist knowledge and ideas.

### **11. Buddhism may change from Disciple to Lecturer.**

Master Hsing Yun advocated the "disciple-to-teacher" approach to Buddhism because it emphasizes the importance of personal practice and experience in understanding the teachings, rather than relying solely on teachings transmitted by monks. He also encouraged believers to become teachers, promoting the spread and continuation of Buddhist traditions. Traditional Buddhist monks don't like lay sentient beings to preach, but Master Hsing Yun believes that it is everyone's responsibility to promote Buddhism. Therefore, when the Buddha Light International Association (BLIA) was established, the system of "Teacher of Sandalwood" and "Teacher of Sandalwood" was clearly stipulated in the articles of association. There are now hundreds of Tan lecturers all over the world preaching Buddhism.

The Teacher of Sandalwood and Teacher of Sandalwood of the Buddha Light International Association (BLIA) are the personnel responsible for spreading Buddhist teachings and teaching disciples to practice. They pass on Buddhist knowledge and principles through lectures, explanations to disciples, and holding Buddhist activities. Teacher of Sandalwood is responsible for leading disciples in spiritual practice and helping them practice Buddhist principles in their lives, making their lives more meaningful and happy. Teacher of Sandalwood and Teacher of Sandalwood are the leaders and guides of the disciples of the Buddha Light International Association (BLIA) (BILA, 2023).

### **12. Buddhism may change from monasteries to synagogues.**

The main difference between monastic Buddhism and synagogue Buddhism is their environment and culture. Monastic Buddhism is usually practiced in a monastic setting, emphasizing spiritual practice, meditation and religious rituals, and is a very formal and structured style of Buddhist practice. In contrast, synagogue Buddhism is usually practiced in a synagogue environment and focuses on imparting Buddhist teachings through modern teaching methods. It is a more approachable and appropriate way of Buddhist practice for modern lifestyles. Therefore, the main difference between monastic Buddhism and synagogue Buddhism is their environment, culture and teaching methods.

Master Hsing Yun advocated that Buddhist activities should be carried out only in monasteries, to the community and the public, and to hold Buddhist activities in more open and barrier-free halls. This approach aims to integrate Buddhist teachings and practices into daily life, so that more sentient beings can benefit from Buddhism, and to promote the influence and status of Buddhism in society. The hundreds of ashrams around the world of Fo Guang Shan belong to the nature of Monastic Buddhism. Breaking through the outdated rules of traditional Buddhist temples, these ashrams integrate the functions of culture, education, charity, and propagating Dharma into one, entirely embodying the spirit of Humanistic Buddhism.

### **13. Buddhism may change from Sect to Respect.**

Sectarian Buddhism refers to the result of distinguishing Buddhism according to different teachings, ways of practice, meditation and other factors. Each denomination usually has its own ancestors, doctrines and canons, and also differs in religious ceremonies

## **Master Hsing Yun: The Pioneering Practitioner of Contemporary Humanistic Buddhism (1927 – 2023)**

and practice methods. Some well-known sects of Buddhism in Taiwan include: Fo Guang Shan, Tzu Chi Merit Association, Dharma Drum Mountain, Chung Tai Chan Monastery, and so on. Buddhism from sect to respect refers to a Buddhist conception that is more inclusive and respectful of the beliefs of others. This concept emphasizes that different branches of Buddhism should respect each other and not split due to differences in sectarian ideas. It emphasizes that all Buddhist believers are equal and should respect the beliefs of others. Master Hsing Yun has always had close interactions with various religions and Buddhist sects. Over the years, he has often exchanged and held dialogues with religious leaders around the world in order to combine religious forces to mutually endorse world peace.

### **14. Buddhism may change from doing good deeds to preaching.**

Master Hsing Yun advocates Buddhism from doing good to preaching, because by doing good and helping others, we can strengthen our faith and spread the spirit and values of Buddhism to others. He advocates the positive influence of Buddhism on individuals and society through practical actions, so as to promote the progress and improvement of society. Only by doing good deeds first can move the sentient beings, and then can we preach and spread the Dharma and convert all living beings.

### **15. Buddhism may change from puja to activity.**

The Buddhist Dharma Assembly is a religious activity with the theme of paying homage to the Buddha and Buddhist sages. Its principle is to help believers advance their beliefs and deepen their knowledge and understanding of Buddhism. Puja usually includes activities such as praying, chanting, practicing, and giving offerings. Buddhist activities are activities aimed at social services and cultural dissemination. The purpose is to promote Buddhism, improve the social environment, and help sentient beings understand Buddhism. Buddhist activities usually include education, social services, cultural activities, environmental protection, psychological counseling, etc.

The forms of the Buddhist Dharma Assembly can be divided into the following types:

1. Respecting the Buddha: Worshiping and praying to the Buddha.
2. Dharma Assembly: A collective practice centered on chanting scriptures and chanting Buddha.
3. Chanting: Chanting Buddhist scriptures to commemorate the life and teachings of Buddha.
4. Pumen Hall: A group practice open to the public.
5. Buddhist courses: the study of Buddhist teachings and ideas.

The purpose of these pujas is to help Buddhist monks and believers practice Buddhism and achieve Nirvana.

Master Hsing Yun advocates "Buddhism from pujas to activities". He believes that the teachings and ideas of Buddhism should be combined with the needs of modern society, and help sentient beings understand Buddhism through various activities, such as cultural activities, social services, and education. Buddhism, practice Buddhism, realize the value of life.

### **16. Buddhism may change from old age to youth.**

"Buddhism for Youth" refers to Buddhist beliefs and activities for young sentient beings to help them solve life problems and improve their moral character through Buddhism. This form of Buddhism can be achieved through holding Buddhist classes for youth, Buddhist events, youth volunteering, etc. The purpose is to enable young sentient beings to improve their faith and morality through Buddhism, and to improve their living and social environment through Buddhism. The age group of Buddhists in Taiwan is gradually getting higher, and we hope to attract more young sentient beings to believe in Buddhism through the above 16 methods.

Master Hsing Yun advocates "Buddhism from old age to youth" because he believes that Buddhism should not only be the belief of the elderly, but should allow more young sentient beings to understand and participate in Buddhist beliefs and activities. Youth are the future of society, if they can improve their character and morality through Buddhism, they will make a great contribution to society. By promoting "Buddhism from old age to youth" to help young sentient beings better understand Buddhism and change their lives through Buddhism. This is the comprehensive humanistic Buddhism (Master Hsing Yun, 2017c).

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Master Hsing Yun once said that for the end of my life, I don't have a relic, and all kinds of red tape are completely exempted. As long as you write a few simple words, or those who want to miss me, you can sing the Buddhist song of "Music in the World". If you have Humanistic Buddhism in your heart and practice Humanistic Buddhism all the time, I think this is the best memory for me and what I sincerely hope for.

On the afternoon of February 6, 2023, I went to Fo Guang Shan Master Hsing Yun's death tribute venue to express my condolences. In the venue, the "Namo Master Sakyamuni Buddha" sung by the Fo Guang Shan Fanbai Praise Group continued to be played. According to Master Yongben, Executive Director of Foguang University, in her encouragement and blessing to all teachers on February 9, 2023, Master Hsing Yun told them that the pure land of the Western Paradise is in the world. We uphold the teachings of the Buddha, Humanistic Buddhism is to mature sentient beings in the human world, adorn the pure land, and the

## Master Hsing Yun: The Pioneering Practitioner of Contemporary Humanistic Buddhism (1927 – 2023)

pure land is in the human world. The leader of the Buddhist world is Sakyamuni Buddha. We want to use the Buddha's education to transform sentient beings, so we chant Namō's master Shakyamuni Buddha.

On February 13, 2023, at 9:00 a.m., the Passion Praise was held in the Yunju Building of Fo Guang Shan. Representatives from all walks of life, meritorious persons at home and abroad, and the International Buddha Light Association were accepted to pay homage to Master Hsing Yun. He was cremated after the praise ceremony. Although Master Hsing Yun said in his will that "I have no relics", as Master Xing Yun's remains were cleaned after cremation, countless relics were found. Fo Guang Shan refers to the so-called relics, which means śarīra relics in Sanskrit. Usually refers to the remains of the Buddha, the solid objects crystallized after the body of the Buddha was incinerated, such as Buddha bones, Buddha teeth, Buddha top bone relics, Buddha finger relics, and so on. According to Buddhist concepts, the reason for the formation of relics is not physiological factors, nor is it food crystallization, but the natural achievement of long-term practice and outstanding merit, which is the result of the Three Learning (Precepts, Concentration, and Wisdom). These sacred objects are believed to have special spiritual and divine powers that can bring good luck, health and happiness to believers, as well as help them achieve peace of mind and awakening. In Buddhism, relics are considered important sacred objects because they represent the power and value of the Dharma. Master Hsing Yun emphasized in his will that "I have no relics", in fact, he wants the public to return to the essence of practice and life, and not to be superstitious about supernatural powers.

Master Hsing Yun said in his last words, "The best memory for me is to practice Humanistic Buddhism. I hope that everyone will be diligent in Humanistic Buddhism and establish a pure land on earth." Master Hsing Yun is the pioneering practitioner of contemporary Humanistic Buddhism. We must continue to uphold Master Hsing Yun's beliefs and promote Humanistic Buddhism.

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