

Walking the Buddhist Path

學佛人應知

Master Chi Hoi

智海法師

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The Author

Dharma Master Chi Hoi (“Ocean of Wisdom”) was born in 1926 in a village near Beijing. At the age of seventeen he was initiated at Chi Fu Monastery, in the Hong Luo Mountains north of Beijing, originally founded by the venerable Master Tsou Wu, the twelfth patriarch of China’s Pure Land school. For three years, Chi Hoi learned the teachings of the Pure Land school and practiced the “recitation of Amitabha Buddha.” In 1944 he entered a Buddhist academy in Beijing to study literature, history, and logic in addition to religion. From 1948, Chi Hoi further studied the Pure Land teachings at Mount Lin Yan Monastery in Suzhou, the monastery of the Pure Land school’s thirteenth patriarch, the venerable Master In Kwong. Chi Hoi then learned the Buddhist doctrines of the Tien-t’ai school from the venerable Master Tan Shu in Hong Kong between 1952 and 1962. He was later appointed the forty-fifth dharma successor of the Tien-t’ai school. Chi Hoi’s philosophical perspective is based on the

fundamental principles of both the Pure Land and the Tien-t'ai schools; his approach to enlightenment likewise combines the faith and devotion to Amitabha Buddha espoused by the former and the one vehicle teaching and emphasis on meditation from the latter.

In 1967 Dharma Master Chi Hoi came to the United States to preach Buddhism and in 1972, founded the Buddhist Wisdom Lecture Hall of Fo Shan Monastery in San Francisco. Chi Hoi devotes his time not only to writing Buddhist literature, but also to traveling around the world to lecture on various sutras as well as Buddhist philosophy. Despite his reputation as a scholar, Chi Hoi always emphasizes the importance of both faith and prajna. Master Chi Hoi wishes to introduce Buddhism to all, and to bring harmony and serenity to the modern mind.

Translator's Preface

In *Walking the Buddhist Path*, Master Chi Hoi focuses on the practical, hands-on side of how to be a Buddhist in the everyday world. The first chapter outlines the Noble Eightfold Path, while the second introduces the Three Jewels of the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha.

Of the Four Truths that Sakyamuni Buddha first taught, the fourth Noble Truth—the truth that leads to the cessation of suffering—is the Noble Eightfold Path. In Buddhist metaphor, the Path is often likened to a map—a map showing how to reach *nirvana*, as well as the map of *nirvana* itself. Following the Eightfold Path with thought and dedication can liberate both body and mind. As Master Chi Hoi emphasizes here, this is the very same path along which all the great Buddhist saints and Bodhisattvas have walked in the past, in order to reach enlightenment.

The Eightfold Path to enlightenment requires great personal diligence and effort. Admittedly, this is hard to do on one's own in the busy, distracting, delusory *saha* world of today. Fortunately, the Three Jewels provide a sanctuary for all those traveling along the Buddhist path! Taking Refuge in the Three Jewels—the Jewel of the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha—means having faith in the Buddha, His teachings and His followers, and looking to them for help and guidance along the way. The official act of Taking Refuge in the Three Jewels—to rely on and receive strength and endowment from the Buddha—is very much a spiritual and physical refuge for both mind and body in today's world.

In this sense, the Noble Eightfold Path and the Jewels together cover dual aspects of the Buddhist path—individual effort and fortification from the Buddha via this simple yet comprehensive text, which is accessible to even the most novice of Buddhists.

Hui-hong and Hui-nien
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Walking the Buddhist Path

The Noble Eightfold Path1

The Three Jewels.....15