

Speech Given by Venerable Master Chin Kung
The World Conference on Religion and Peace
"How to Create a Fulfilling and Prosperous Multicultural World"
3 March, 1999

In 1996, Venerable Master Chin Kung was introduced to Mr. Uri Themal, the Executive Director of Multicultural Affairs of Queensland. He told Master Chin Kung that in recent years the government of Australia had adopted a public policy of welcoming people from other countries to immigrate to Australia.

These people represent different backgrounds, races and cultures. They have different ideas, religious beliefs and ways of living. Now, living together, how can they mutually respect, care, love and help each other, create a fulfilling life, a peaceful environment and a prosperous society? Mr. Themal's concerns are very appropriate and very rare. They are the same concerns as those of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, how to benefit all sentient beings. Mr. Themal truly has the wisdom and heart of a Bodhisattva.

Early in 1998, Master Chin Kung visited Bond University of Gold Coast, Australia and met with Professor Paul Wilson, Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. The university, with over two thousand students coming from thirty different countries, is not unlike a small United Nations. They are searching both for a way to form a harmonious multicultural environment where students and teachers live and study together harmoniously as well as a way to advocate this spirit throughout the world.

During his conversation with Professor Wilson, Master Chin Kung naturally thought of the *Flower Adornment Sutra*. At the beginning of the

sutra, there are one hundred seventy-five groups attending the assembly who are of different species from different worlds throughout the universe. It is the quintessential multiculture, the gathering together of beings from diverse cultures with different beliefs, enjoying harmonious and virtuous living. In order to help us to achieve this same harmony, all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas first explain that the universe is perfect, is one entity.

The Chinese classic from three thousand years ago, *I Ching, the Book of Changes* explains how Heaven and Earth, the four seasons and all phenomena were originally formed from infinite particles. Lao Zi clarified further that the universe and we share the same root and that all creations and we are one entity. As Buddha Shakyamuni said, we all arose from the same essence.

If we wish to achieve a harmonious multiculture, we need to have the realization and understanding that we are all one, then all of our problems will be solved. As ordinary beings, we do not yet have this understanding thus our every thought, word and action is only for ourselves, our family and our group. Our selfishness has resulted in our harming others to benefit ourselves. This way of thinking has led to quarrels among people, feuds among families, wars among countries. It is the basic cause of natural and human-made disasters. If we observe this world calmly, we might well wonder what is the cause of these increasing disasters? It is our increasing selfishness. As the Buddha told us, all disasters; all consequences come from our ignorance, our false beliefs and wrong views. If we think of a tree as representing the universe and look at its leaves individually, as ourselves, they appear to be separate but in reality they are part of the whole. Our thinking of ourselves as being separate creates confrontations.

If we were to look more carefully, we would see that the leaves originate from the same branch and that all branches grow from the same trunk. Looking deeply into the tree, to its root, we realize that the leaves, branches, trunk, roots are all one entity. Once we truly understand this, all confrontations will vanish, as our loving-kindness and compassion naturally arise, as we care for others as we care for ourselves. This is truly reaching the non-duality between us and others, understanding that we are one being, are all interrelated with one another.

This is truly realizing that the universe is one ideal family, that all groups are one complete multiculture. Thus all disputes between we and others will naturally dissolve. This true reality is the very heart of the *Flower Adornment Sutra*, making it ideal as teaching material for multicultural study. The word “Flower” represents the innumerable diverse groups in the universe. The word “Adornment” represents the concept that all these diversities do not hinder us but combine to create the perfect beauty of the universe. Those who have this great broad-mindedness and understanding are awakened beings like Buddhas or Bodhisattvas.

Last year, Master Chin Kung visited Griffith University of Queensland where they are establishing a multifaith center advocated by Mr. Themal. Master Chin Kung was delighted and pledged his full support. He suggested that the university consider establishing a multicultural institute, to train professionals to promote stability and world peace. His ideal is to have many multicultural universities or at least a multicultural department in every university.

The principles and methods of the Buddha’s teachings are both logical and practical. These teachings are a treasure of humanity. They are the wisdom, the common thread that is the very essence, the very heart, the very

root of our religious and secular cultures. These are the perfection of the universe, which can perfectly solve all our problems. We would do well to learn and emulate them.

Today, Venerable Master Chin Kung considers himself most fortunate to be able to attend this very rare and special gathering. He is grateful to you, for you are individuals with great foresight, dedication and wisdom. To the sponsors of this conference, the religious and academic leaders, and the government of Australia, he expresses his deep-felt admiration and respect as he pledges his full support to the accomplishment of this great aspiration. Thank you.