

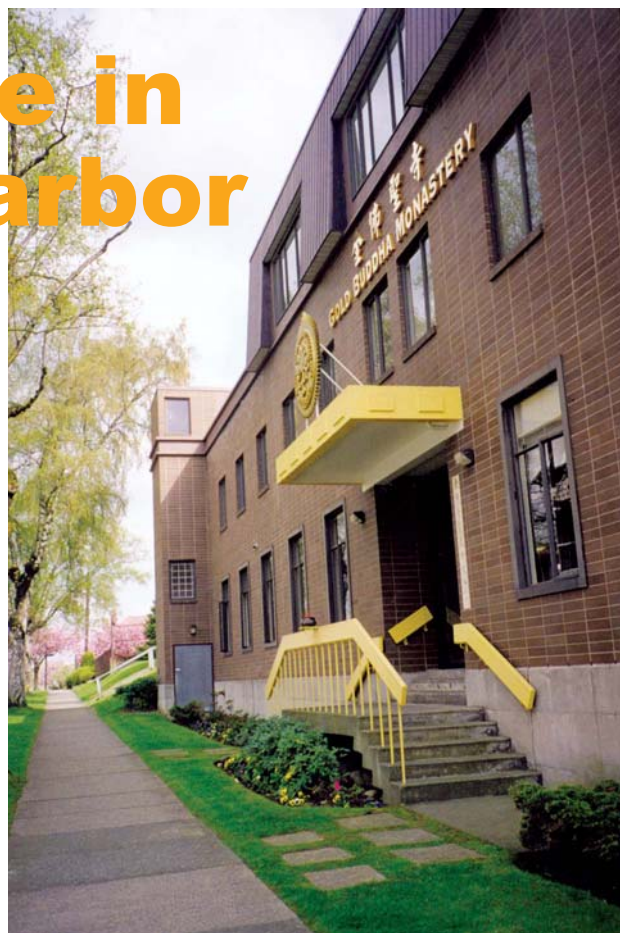
Liberating Life in Vancouver Harbor

溫哥華港的放生

Respecting Life,
Benefiting
Living Beings

尊重生命，
普遍饒益衆生

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憨山大師放生功德偈：

人既愛其壽，生物愛其命；
放生合天心，放生順佛命。
放生免三災，放生離九橫，
放生壽命長，放生官祿盛，
放生子孫昌，放生家門慶，
放生無憂惱，放生少疾病，
放生解冤結，放生罪垢淨；
放生觀音慈，放生普賢行。
放生與殺生，果報明如鏡。



Verse of Merit and Virtue
by Great Master Han Shan :

*Just as people love to live long,
All beings love their life.*

*Liberating life is heaven's wish;
Liberating life fulfills Buddha's
teaching.*

*Liberating life averts the three
disasters;*

Liberating life frees us from the nine accidents.

By liberating life, we gain longevity;

By liberating life, we enjoy prosperity.

By liberating life, we gain offspring.

By liberating life, we ensure happiness in the family,

By liberating life, we are free of worries;

By liberating life, we seldom fall ill.

By liberating life, we dissolve enmity.

By liberating life, we purify our karma.

Liberating life is Guan Yin's kindness;

Liberating life is Universal Worthy's practice.

Whether we liberate life or take life,

Our retribution is as clear as a mirror.





三災，就是刀兵災、疾疫災、飢饉災。九橫，就是得病無醫、王法誅戮、非人奪精氣、為火所焚、水中沉溺、為惡獸所啖、橫墮山崖、毒藥咒詛、飢渴所困。因為久修放生這種善業所得來的，所以才能壽命長；如果想壽命長，就要放生。

身為大乘的佛教徒，大乘菩薩都是行持菩薩道，修六度萬行。在六度萬行之中，以六度（布施、持戒、忍辱、精進、禪定、般若）為主；六度又以布施為第一。布施有三種：財施、法施、無畏施。

The three disasters are war, disease and hunger. The nine accidents are incurable disease, the death penalty, being drained of vitality by a nonhuman entity, being burned by fire, being drowned, being devoured by an animal, falling off a mountain, being put under a spell, hunger and dehydration. People who practice liberating life consequently enjoy long life. If you wish for longevity, then you need to liberate life.

As Mahayana Buddhists, we know that Bodhisattvas practice the Bodhisattva Path which consists of the Six Paramitas and Myriad Practices. Within the Six Paramitas and Myriad Practices, they mostly focus on the Six Paramitas (giving, upholding precepts, patience, vigor, Samadhi and prajna wisdom); within these Six



Paramitas, giving comes first. There are three kinds of giving: the giving of wealth, the giving of Dharma, and the giving of fearlessness.





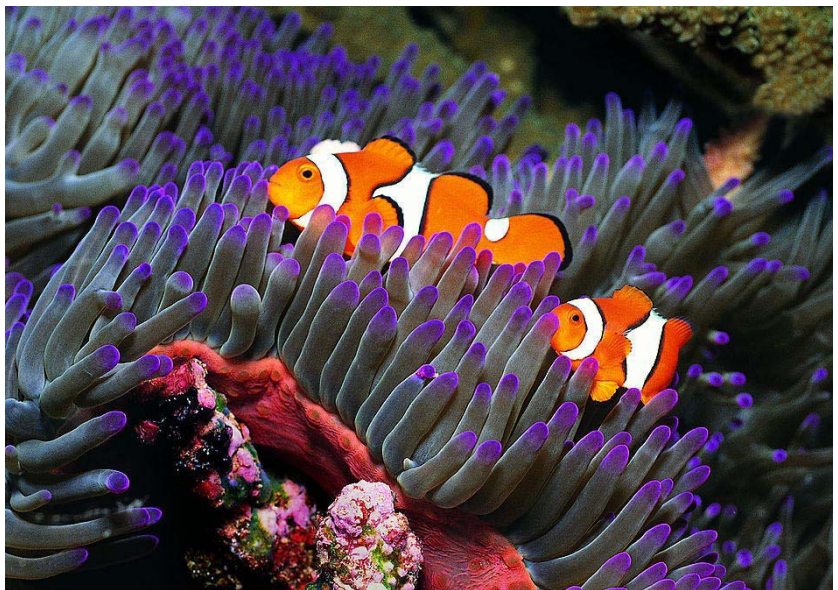
「放生」是需要有一些條件，首先要知道所放的生靈是什麼？是飛禽？是走獸？是海族？還是昆蟲？適合在什麼地方放生？觀察生態環境是非常重要的，這就是一種無畏施，使這些生靈遠離死亡的怖畏。破壞生態，無視於環保的重要，使生物互相生剋，而造成大批死亡和傷殘，這也是傷害生命的表現，還造成生態環境的破壞。

金佛寺位於加拿大溫哥華；溫哥華市有太平洋門戶之稱，四面環水，是北美洲太平洋沿岸的最大天然良港。早期的金佛寺是在唐人街，魚店就在隔壁，放生法會很自然就成為我們例行的活動；在2000年時，雖然從唐人街搬到現址，但二十年多來，每月的最後一個星期日早上的放生法會依然不變，也是專門放生海族，以便趕得及把漁民剛捕撈的海洋生物立刻送歸大海。

放生也就是「放我」，因為我和眾生是一體的，眾生也就是我，我也就是眾生。這就好像當人與人之間必須透過了解與寬恕，才能化干

戈為玉帛，否則會互相折磨。在中國農業社會時期，農夫收割稻穀時，會在角落留下一叢稻穀給小鳥食用，這就是慈悲心，就是尊重生命。看到蝸牛毫無目的往街上慢行，逐漸吐盡唾液，我把牠輕移到有草坪之處，這就是我跟這蝸牛之間的生命有了一種延續；一個小小的動作，能使蝸牛重獲生命的甘泉，也無形之中，使我免於渴死在生命的沙漠裡。

往往我們很有心來放生，但又因為對生命的認識不夠，不尊重生命和不愛護生命，所以也很會殺生，這樣就無法做到普遍饒益眾生。世間上最寶貴者莫如生命，任何生命都應該獲得尊重。為什麼要放生？《華嚴經》〈十地品〉云：「於一切眾生有命之者，常生利益慈念之心。」這是可以增長我們的慈悲心，讓牠們得到自由。我們不殺生，這也是修慈悲心。



There are some requirements to liberating life. First, we need to know the kind of animals we want to liberate. Do they fly in the sky, run on the ground, or swim in the sea? Are they insects? Where is the appropriate place to liberate them? It's very important to select a proper environment; this is a form of giving fearlessness, to assist these animals to evade death. If people don't care about the environment, the animals will prey upon each other and suffer injury and death. Then one is hurting life and damaging the environment.

Gold Buddha Monastery is located in Vancouver, Canada. Known as the gateway to the Pacific Ocean Vancouver is surrounded by water and is the largest natural harbor of the Pacific Ocean in North America. In the early days, Gold Buddha Monastery was located in Chinatown, next to a fish market, so naturally liberating sea creatures became our frequent activity. In the year of 2000, we moved from Chinatown to the current location, but for more than 20 years, on the last Sunday of the month, the liberating life ceremony has been held without fail. We still liberate sea creatures, so we can send the sea creatures just caught by the fishermen back to the ocean immediately.

Liberating life is liberating ourselves, because living being and we are as one. A living being is just myself; I myself am a living being. People can get along if they are able to understand and forgive, but otherwise they suffer together. In China, farmers leave

some grains for the birds to eat during the harvest season; this shows their kindness and compassion and their respect for life. When I see a snail crossing the street, I will move him to the lawn; this is the continuation of life between the snail and myself. From this action, the snail's life is saved and I feel like I have avoided death from dehydration in the desert of life.



Often, we want to liberate life, but we do not understand the animals adequately. Then we end up not respecting and not caring about life and possibly taking life instead. Because of our ignorance, we fail to benefit living beings. The most precious thing in the world is life. Any type of life should be respected. Why liberate life? The Ten Grounds Chapter in the Avatamsaka Sutra says, "Towards all beings endowed with life, generate kind and beneficial thoughts." This can increase one's kind and compassionate intentions to free them. To refrain from killing is also to practice kindness and compassion.



在《華嚴經》〈如來出現品〉云：

「諸佛世尊，大慈救護一切眾生，大悲度脫一切眾生，大慈大悲普遍饒益。」無有一微塵許非是菩薩捨身命處！諸佛世尊大慈救護、大悲度脫所有一切的眾生，大慈大悲普遍饒益所有的眾生。普遍饒益所有的眾生，這就是以慈心攝受利益一切眾生。

我們在魚店，從準備上市將被宰殺的這些比目魚、鱈魚、石斑魚、螃蟹、蝦、蛤、牡蠣等等，挑選肥大的、有卵的，這麼一缸缸的把牠們買下來；出錢買這些待宰的海族就是財施。在《梵網經》上說：「若見世人殺畜生時，應方便救護，解其苦難。」把將被烹煮宰的海生物給解救了下來，免其恐懼，讓牠們統統還歸於大海，這是很大的功德，這也才是真正的無畏施，也正是普遍饒益眾生。

在溫哥華海洋漁業署條規之下，金佛寺在這二十多年來一直遵守著。每個月放生海產的金額或數量，之前差不多可以放到1000至2000加幣的海產；2003年

到2006年可以放到2000至3000加幣上下的海產；從2007年可以增加到700磅，700磅的海產大約要4000至5000加幣左右。在2007年底，溫哥華海洋漁業署辦事員幾次來金佛寺實地勘查之後，從2008年開始准許放到1400磅。所以，金佛寺也是溫哥華區唯一可以放生這麼多磅海洋生物的寺院。

溫哥華海洋漁業署表示可以放的海族種類有：大比目魚、比目魚、鱈魚、鯰魚、鰈魚、檸檬魚、石斑魚、老鼠斑魚、牛頭魚、海鯧、螃蟹、大蝦、小蝦、蛤、小圓蛤、太平洋牡蠣。



The "Appearance of the Thus Come One" chapter in the Avatamsaka Sutra says, "All Buddhas, World Honored Ones, rescue and protect all living beings in their great kindness, and liberate all

living beings out of great compassion; they benefit all beings through their great kindness and great compassion." There is not a single mote of dust where the Bodhisattva has not given up his life! All Buddhas, World Honored One, out of tremendous kindness and compassion, help, rescue, and cross over all living beings. Their great kindness and compassion pervasively benefits all living beings.

In the fish market, we buy halibut, ling cod, rockfish, crab, shrimp, clam, oyster etc. which are about to be killed and sold. We pick the big ones with eggs. We buy them by the container. To pay money to buy these sea creatures is to practice the giving of wealth. The Brahma Net Sutra says: "If we see people killing animals, we need to rescue them, to liberate them from suffering." To free living beings destined for slaughter, to free them from fear, to return all of them to the ocean, is a greatly meritorious deed. This is a true gift of fearlessness. This is to extensively benefit living beings.

For more than 20 years, Gold Buddha Monastery has been following the regulations of the Fisheries and Oceans Department in Vancouver. In the beginning, we bought 1,000 Canadian dollars' worth of sea creatures. Starting from year 2000, we can liberate



about 3,000 Canadian dollars' worth of sea creatures. From year of 2007, we increased to 700 pounds, worth about 4,000 to 5,000 Canadian dollars, of sea creatures. At the end of 2007, the Fisheries and Oceans Department in Vancouver has visited Gold Buddha Monastery a few times. Then starting in 2008, they approved us to liberate up to 1,400 pounds of sea creatures. Therefore, Gold Buddha Monastery became the monastery that can liberate the most sea creatures in the Vancouver region.

The Fisheries and Oceans Department indicated that we can liberate the following ocean creatures: halibut, flounder, ling cod, bullhead, rock sole, lemon sole, rockfish, greenling, cabezon, butter, crab, prawn, shrimp, clam, littleneck and Pacific oysters.



每個生命的個體，因緣雖然是無常，但生命體都是平等的！從佛法的基本精神，如何認識自己的心性，就得先從尊重生命開始，進而觀照生命、關懷生命；對於萬物有這樣的慈悲心，才能真正令一切眾生都離苦得樂。佛法不是口頭禪，更不是形而上的理論，而是在日常生活中必須確確實實去行持，無論是一株草、一朵花、一棵樹，也不忍把它折斷；或者一個小瓢蟲、一隻螞蟻、一隻蚊蟲，甚至一條小魚苗、一粒魚卵，也不傷害牠、不惱害牠——這就是慈悲心，這就是普遍饒益眾生。

比起很多放生的生命體，一般海族是不適合放生，因為牠太脆弱了。從魚店挑選一缸缸的魚類海族，在每月的最後一個星期日早上9點30分之前，一定要

運載到金佛寺門口，我們不只是要在很短時間準備幾個超大的塑膠桶，裡面還要趕緊安裝好空氣唧筒，儘量做到週全完備，否則會造成放生前有些海族生物的死亡。

金佛寺還在唐人街時，數十位男居士往往都得把這一桶一桶的海族生物等，直接抬入佛殿內；自從搬到現址，這一桶桶就抬到佛寺大門前，因為一進門左側就是佛殿。我們先起「楊枝淨水讚」，誦念三遍〈大悲咒〉，以甘露水為這些海洋生物來灑淨的同時，這些潑刺刺生猛的海魚不斷拍著桶子裡的水，螃蟹和蝦子也不斷的擺動，好像知道這一天是牠們重生之日。

灑淨結束，並且為牠們作放生儀式，誦念《心經》、〈往生咒〉，並啟請三寶，為這些生靈在三寶前發露懺悔，然後授與三皈依，令他們「皈依佛，不墮地獄；皈依法，不墮餓鬼；皈依僧，不墮傍生」。法師更為這些生靈說「十二因緣法」，然後為牠們稱四弘誓願，與稱讚如來名號；法師也向這些海族生靈祝禱「既放之後，永不遭遇惡魔吞噉、網捕相加；獲盡天年，命終之後，承三寶力，隨緣往生；持戒修行，見佛聞法，授菩提記，轉化眾生。」

Although the causes and conditions of each life are impermanent, every life is equal! Based on the basic teaching of the Buddhadharma, we learn to understand the nature of our mind. First, we learn to respect life, then we learn to contemplate life and care for life. By

applying the mind of kindness and compassion to everything, we can help all living beings leave suffering and enjoy happiness. The Buddhadharmā is not just a conversation topic, not just a theory, it is an action that we need to uphold and practice in our daily life. Regardless of whether it is a blade of grass, a flower, or a tree, we don't want to break it. Whether it is a worm, an ant, a fly, a fish, or a fish egg, we don't want to harm or disturb it. This is the mind of kindness and compassion. This is to widely benefit all living beings.

Many types of living creatures can be liberated, but some sea creatures are unfit to be released into the sea because their lives are too fragile. After we buy fishes and sea creatures from the fish market, we must deliver them to the doorstep at Gold Buddha Monastery on the last Sunday of each month before 9:30 a.m. Within a short time we need to place these sea creatures in some super-sized plastic containers and install oxygen pipes. We do all the preparations to ensure that no sea creature dies before the liberating life ceremony.

When Gold Buddha Monastery was still located in Chinatown, many laymen often placed the containers with the sea creatures directly into the Buddha Hall. Since we moved, the containers are placed at the front door of the monastery because the left side is the Buddha Hall after we enter the door way. First, we sing the Praise for Purifying the Water and recite the Great Compassion Mantra three

times, then sprinkle the purified water on these sea creatures. The fishes swing their bodies and splash the water, the crabs and shrimps also make lots of movement. It seems like they know this is the day that they will be liberated.

After the boundaries have been purified, the Liberating Life Ceremony begins. We recite the Heart of Prajñā Paramitā Sūtra and the Rebirth Mantra. Then we request the Triple Jewel to come and we repent on behalf of these sea creatures, then conduct the Three Refuges Ceremony to allow them to "take refuge with the Buddha, to avoid falling into the hells; take refuge with the Dharma, to avoid falling among the hungry ghosts; take refuge with the Saṅgha, to avoid falling among the animals." The Dharma Master speaks "The Dharma of the Twelve Links of Conditioned Causation" to them, then speaks the Four Great Vows and praises the Thus Come One. The presiding Dharma Master also recites "We wish that after you are released, you will never again encounter evil demons, be devoured by predators or snared in nets, and that you will live out your natural span of years. We wish that at the end of your lives you will, because you have received the power of the Triple Jewel, be reborn in accord with conditions, maintain the precepts, cultivate, see the Buddha, hear the Dharma, receive the prediction of a Bodhisattva, and transform living beings."

在經書裡都有清楚記載著，讓這些被放生的生靈聽到佛名號和咒語，對牠們都有很大的利益。《華嚴經》〈普賢行願品〉提到：「一塵中有塵數刹，一一刹有難思佛；一一佛處眾會中，我見恆演菩提行。」所以在作放生儀式時，我們要發起菩提心和慈悲喜捨四無量心，透過觀想，把每一聲的佛號和咒語融入自身中，向內觀照，再迴旋融入每一個被放生的生靈體內，希望透過觀想而得到加持。

另外，也可以觀三輪體空，把放生的我和被放的生命，以及放生地點，觀想為空。《金剛經》云：「於法應無所住，行於布施」，無相而布施的功德，才是無量的。三輪體空，就是不應該有所執著，做了就像沒做一樣，摧破執著之相。

放生時，為牠們念佛名號、誦念咒語、說法、授三皈依和發願回向，這就是法布施；法布施是特別重要，為什麼？可增長牠的善根，進而得到解脫。如果不為牠們念佛等等，這僅僅是放了一條生命而已，而不是真正去救牠的法身慧命，沒有得到真實的受用。

放生儀式完畢，繼續誦念阿彌陀佛聖號，然後趕緊用貨車把這一桶一桶的海洋生物運載到港口，眾多居士也隨後開車一起到溫哥華布拉德入海口 (Burrard Inlet)。

在早期的放生，這個港口本來是私人物產，好在有一位溫哥華警察同情我們的需要，給了一把「皇家警察船舶啟碇專用坡道」大門的鑰匙。後來港口已經是皇家政府管轄的，在不同的港灣裡，還是有一個船舶啟碇專用坡道的鐵門，大門開口處是一條通往水邊的坡道，往往會有泊了些六呎長的小船，偶爾在遠處也停泊有載客的超級豪華郵輪。

The sutra clearly indicates that these liberated beings derive great benefit from hearing the Buddha's name and the mantras. The Universal Worthy Conduct and Vows





Chapter in the Avatamsaka Sutra says: "There are many lands in a mote of dust; in every land there are unimaginable Buddhas; every Buddha dwells in an assembly. I see them constantly cultivating Bodhi deeds." Therefore, during the Liberating Life Ceremony, we need to bring forth the Bodhi mind and the Four Limitless Mental Qualities of kindness, compassion, joy, and giving. Through this contemplation, we put the Buddha's name and the mantras into our own body, contemplate within ourselves, then return the contemplation to the living beings being liberated. May they gain happiness through the contemplation.

Also, we can contemplate the emptiness of the three aspects: that is, the living beings being liberated, the self, and the place where the liberation is performed are all empty. The Vajra Prajna Paramita Sutra says, "One should practice giving without any attachment to the Dharma." The merit and virtue of an offering

made with no attachment to form is truly limitless. The emptiness of the three aspects means there is no attachment. One performs deeds as if not performing them, breaking through all attachment.

During the liberation ceremony, we recite the Buddha's name for the creatures, recite mantras, speak the Dharma, perform Three Refuges, make vows and transfer merit. This is just like making a Dharma offering. A Dharma offering is especially important. Why? It can increase their wholesome foundation, so they can attain liberation. If we don't recite the Buddha's name for them, then although we have physically freed them, we have not truly helped them to realize their Dharma body and their wholesome foundation. They didn't receive the true benefit.

After the Liberating Life Ceremony ended, we continue to recite Amitabha Buddha's name, then we move the containers with the sea creatures onto the trucks and take them to the harbor. Many laypeople also drive to the Burrard Inlet Harbor in Vancouver.

In the early days, this was a private estate, but then a Vancouver police officer understood our need and gave us the front gate key to enter the Royal Police Boat Launching Ramp. Later on, the harbor regulated by the royal government moved to another dock, and there is a gate on the boat launching ramp. There is a sloped ramp at the front gate entrance. Often, there will be six foot long boat or an upscale cruise boat docked in the harbor.

每月最後一個星期日的放生法會，參加的居士把偌大的佛殿，擠著裡裡外外數不清的人；有來自不同地方、不同宗教，有西方人、東方人，有修漢傳佛法的、修藏傳佛法的、修小乘佛法的，甚至有人只是歡喜這樣的放生活動。有人為了親人或自身宿疾而來參加放生以祈福，有人為了還願而來參加放生以了心願，有人更為尊重生命而來參加放生法事。無論為著什麼，每個人臉上都透露出祈望和法喜。

《華嚴經》〈如來出現品〉又云：「所謂水族眾生，得水饒益；陸地眾生，得地饒益；宮殿眾生，得宮殿饒益；虛空眾生，得虛空饒益。」凡是在水裡生存的眾生，好像魚、鱉、蝦、蟹等都叫水族的眾生，牠們都得到水的這種饒益；陸地的眾生，就是一切的動物、一切的畜生都包括在內了，牠們就得到地的饒益；宮殿眾生就是指人類，人類眾生則得屋宅饒益；虛空中的飛禽，還有一些個微生物，得虛空的饒益。

一抵達港口，向皇家警察打個招呼後，幾十位男眾居士合力搬拿裝有海生物的大桶子，兩個人一桶，很有秩序地這麼樣經過港口的坡道，一桶一桶抬進平台水邊放著。整個港口平台上，不消一會，都站滿了人。

在法師持引罄帶領下，我們所有的人就這麼一邊虔心齊誦南無阿彌陀佛聖號，一邊把桶子裡的海族魚類，若是魚兒、蝦類，一整桶倒入海裡；若是大魚，使勁地用手將魚撈出，順手滑往大

海中；若是蛤蚌、牡蠣之類，用手捧著慢慢地投入海內；若是大螃蟹，把繫綁的麻繩解開後，用手一隻隻親手放回海裡。

在念佛聲中，把這些海洋生物歸回海裡，往往看見有些魚兒漫遊了一小段之後又折回來，在海上揚波翻騰，甚至翻躍點頭稱謝。眼見所放生的海洋生物，統統還歸大海了，心中那份祥和歡悅，不是語言文字所能描述的。最後，在法師領唱迴向偈聲中，大眾如法圓滿地參與這有意義的殊勝放生法事。

宣公上人提到：「放生佛法裡頭，佔很重要的地位；不過你自己沒有領悟到這種的道理，就認為它是很普通的。你想要得到你自己的放生，就得要先修這個放生；你不修這個放生，就得不到那個放生。這是生生不已，化化無窮的道理；你不要把這個放生看得小了。你這兒做了一點，那地方就增加了很多；修道，就是自己要去修行的。你不明白這個道理，切記不要批評這種法門！」

At the Liberating Life Dharma Assembly on the last Sunday of each month, the great Buddha Hall is packed with lay people from different places and different traditions. There are Westerners, Asians, Chinese Buddhists, Tibetan Buddhists, Theravada Buddhists, and people who come just to enjoy the ceremony. Some come to pray for blessings for their family member or pray for themselves. Other come to pray because their prayer has been answered. Some come because they respect life and respect the Liberating Life Dharma Assembly.

Regardless, everyone's face shows his hope and joy in the Dharma.

The "Appearance of the Thus Come One" chapter in the Avatamsaka Sutra says "Living beings in the water receive benefit from the water; living beings on land receive benefit from the land; living beings in the palace receive benefit from the palace; living beings in the air receive benefit from the air." Aquatic creatures such as fish, turtles, shrimp, crabs, are beings of the water who receive benefit from the water. All land animals, including farm animals, receive benefit from the land. Beings who live in the palace refers to humans, who receive benefit from their homes. Living beings in the air refer to flying species, including insects, who receive benefit from the air.

We notify the Royal Police Force once we reach the harbor; then many laymen work together to move the containers holding the sea creatures. Two-person teams move them

to the slope and put them down on the docking station. In a short time, the entire docking station is packed with people.

The Dharma Master leads us with the sound of the bell, and every one of us sincerely recites "Homage to Amitabha Buddha." At the

same time, we pour the sea creatures out of the containers. If they are fish or shrimp, then they will be slowly poured into the ocean. If they are big fish, then we will pick them up by hand and slide them into the ocean. If they are clams or oysters, then we will pick them up by hand and slowly put them into the ocean. If they are big crabs, then we will untie the rope and use our hands to put them back to the ocean one by one.

As we recite the Buddha's name, these sea creatures return to the ocean. Often, we see the fish swim for awhile and return over and over; they swim freely in the ocean and seem to be saying thank you to us by nodding their heads. Finally, as the Dharma Master leads us to sing the Verse for Transferring the Merit, the assembly completes the meaningful and profound Liberating Life Dharma Assembly in accord with the Dharma.

Venerable Master Hua mentioned, "Liberating Life has a very important place in Buddhism. People do not understand the meaning so we think that is very common. If you want to liberate yourself, first you need to practice liberating life. If you don't practice liberating life, then you cannot be liberated. This is the theory of limitless birth and limitless transformation. Don't take this lightly. If you work more on this, then you will grow more in this area. Cultivating the Way means to cultivate yourself. Take care not to slander this dharma door just because you do not understand the meaning of it!

