

2020 World Interfaith Harmony Week

The Five Harmonies and Humanistic Buddhism

Skype Online Forum Report

LONDON BUDDHIST RESEARCH SUPPORT GROUP
OF LONDON FO GUANG SHAN

28 FEBRUARY 2020, THE UK

The Five Harmonies and Humanistic Buddhism

Parliament affiliated World Interfaith Harmony Week event.

UN Official Observance

Date and time: 28th Feb (Friday), 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Session 1

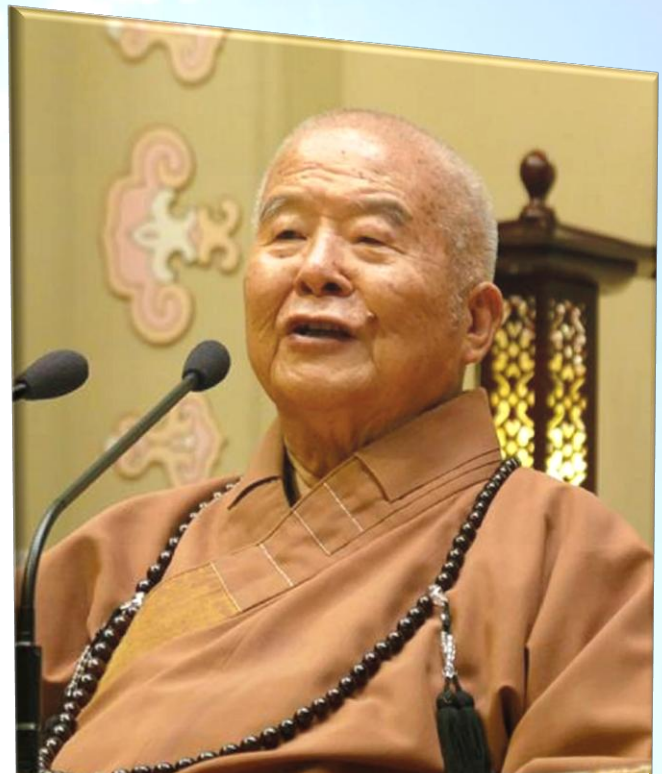
How to help people in achieving spiritual transformation and world peace by Five Harmonies

Session 2

Interfaith to Promote Harmony

Five Harmonies:

- Harmony of joy within oneself • Harmony of cooperation within the family • Harmony of respect between self and other • Harmony of unity in society • Harmony of peace throughout the world



Ven. Master Hsing Yun advocates to promote the principles of Humanistic Buddhism in bringing harmony and peace among all the living being around the world. He reminds people that to transform our world, we must cultivate ourselves and others. Fo Guang Shan utilises a variety of means to propagate the Dharma throughout all aspects of human life, which involves providing educational opportunities, sponsoring cultural events, engaging in community services and teaching the Buddhist path of wisdom and compassion.

Skype Online Forum - Synchronous Online Video Conferencing
Buddhism Research Support Group of Fo Guang Shan London



THE PARLIAMENT IS YOUR PARTNER IN



World Interfaith
Harmony Week

UN Official Observance - 1st Week of Feb



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**World Interfaith
Harmony Week**

UN Official Observance - 1st Week of February

The Five Harmonies and Humanistic Buddhism

AGENDA

Session 1

How to help people in achieving spiritual transformation and world peace by Five Harmonies

MC: Alex Lee

7:00 – 7:05 PM

VIP Introduction

7:05 – 7:10 PM

Welcome Speech

Venerable You Wang (UN NGO)

7:10 – 7:20 PM

Professor Bee Scherer, Zivile Adulcikaite

7:20 – 7:30 PM

Dr. Jonathan Mair, NI Haiying

Session 2

Interfaith to Promote Harmony

MC: Ricky Wong

8:00 – 8:05 PM

VIP Introduction

8:05 – 8:10 PM

Welcome Speech

Venerable Man Kuang (UN NGO)

8:10 – 8:20 PM

Dhruv Chhatralia, Dr. Peter Bennetts

8:20 – 8:30 PM

Imam Mansoor Ahmad Clarke, Sarit Gafan



Date: Friday, 28th February, 2020

Time: 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Skype Online Forum

Synchronous Online Video Conferencing

7:30 – 7:40 PM

Prof. Will Tuladhar-Douglas, Ricky Wong

7:40 – 7:50 PM

Rajnish Kashyap, Kyra Li

7:50 – 8:00 PM

LIN Zuqiang, Tracy Liu

8:40 – 9:00 PM

About Master Hsing Yun

**Members of London Buddhist Research
Support Group**

Chris Du

Ming Lin

Yolanda Su

Zhe Wang

Connie Suluihana

Alex Yu

Maggie Wong

SESSION ONE



ALEX LEE

President of Buddha's Light
International Association
London Chapter



VEN. YOU WANG

UN NGO Representative Present,
Fo GuangShan New York



PROF. BEE SCHERER

Director of the INCISE
Research Centre; Numata
Professor, Ryokoku University



ZIVILE ADULCIKAITE

Member of LBRSG
Coordinator, St. Joseph's
Hospice, Yoga Therapist



DR. JONATHAN MAIR

Senior Lecturer and
Programme Convenor in
Social Anthropology,
Kent University



NI HAIYING

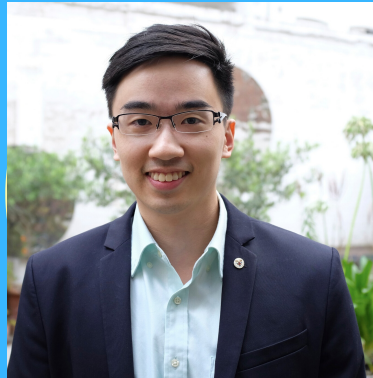
PhD Student in Social
Anthropology, Kent University
Member of LBRSG

SESSION ONE



PROF. WILL TULADHAR-DOUGLAS

Director, Situgyan Consulting Ltd.
Research Fellow, Numata Centre for Buddhist Studies, Hamburg University



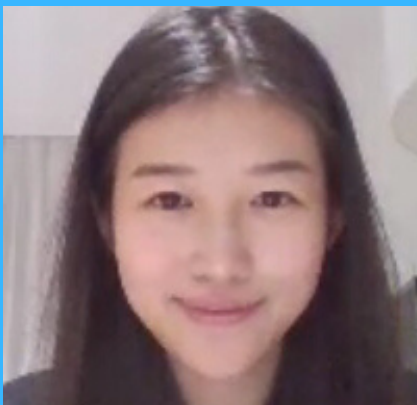
RICKY WONG

President of London Buddhist Research Support Group, London Fo Guang Shan



RAJNISH KASHYAP

General Secretary
Hindu Council UK



KYRA LI

Member of Buddha's Light International Association-Young Adult Division



LIN ZUQIANG

Sino-French Cultural Critic and Broadcast Journalist based in Paris



TRACY LIU

PhD Student in Social Anthropology, University of Cambridge; Member of LBRSG

FIVE HARMONIES AND HUMANISTIC BUDDHISM

SESSION TWO



VEN. MAN KUANG

Abbess of International Buddhist Progress Society – Dallas, the UAS



DHRUV CHHATRALIA

Corporate Lawyer; Author of 21 books on Hinduism; Winner of 2020 British Empire Medal



DR. PETER BENNETTS

Head of Interfaith and Visits, London Central Mosque and The Islamic Cultural Centre



IMAM MANSOOR AHMAD CLARKE

London Based Regional Missionary for the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community with a Passion for Journalism



SARIT GAFAN

Author, Gratitude Goldmine

SESSION TWO

MEMBERS OF LONDON BUDDHIST RESEARCH SUPPORT GROUP, LONDON FO GUANG SHAN

Maggie Wong

(Vice President)



*Connie
Suluhana*



Alex Yu



Chris Du



Wang Zhe



Lin Ming



Yolanda Su



Session One Speech Collection

Welcome Speech by Venerable You Wang

Good evening! Auspicious greetings to everyone!

I am Venerable You Wang, serving at FGS temple in New York, also representing BLIA as one of the NGOs at the United Nations. Thanks to Venerable Miao Lung invited me to represent BLIA and also many thanks to you for joining this online forum.

Today, we are going to talk about how to help people in achieving spiritual transformation and world peace by “Five Harmonies”.

The founder of Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Monastery and Buddha’s Light International Association, Venerable Master Hsing Yun, first presented the concepts of “Five Harmonies” at the World Economic Forum in the summer of 2012 at Davos.

In his speech, Venerable Master Hsing Yun said, “Everyone can certainly enjoy individual harmony that is achieved through peace; interpersonal harmony that is achieved through respect; family harmony that is achieved through deference; social harmony that is achieved through cooperation and world harmony that is achieved through peace.”

The five harmonies listed above are the ideals of society. Only through harmony can wealth be acquired. Harmony is what gives everything meaning and value.

But how can we help people to achieve spiritual transformation and bring harmony into our daily lives and society?

In this speech, Master Hsing Yun taught us that, during times when we encounter any difficulties and a harsh situation, what we need to establish is faith. It is faith that brings confidence and strength. Since time immemorial, as a result of confidence in values that are good and beautiful, humans have been able to improve our lives, take control of our future, and strive for greater social welfare.

Faith can enhance our moral value and personal integrity. Therefore, people in the world and any society can embrace diversity and accept difficulty with equality and tolerance and compassion and harmony, which means Oneness and coexistence.

In Humanistic Buddhism, Venerable Master Hsing Yun guide us to promote equality for all through the idea of “oneness” and to propagate the spirit of kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity through the idea of “coexistence.” When we can set aside our selfishness and prejudices in order to help each other, we are also respecting the right of every living being to exist.

We all know that “when all the rivers flow into the ocean, they will only have one taste: the taste of saltiness.”

When we learn to accept changes or differences in our lives, we will have the joy and harmony in our life.

We must keep these three points in mind.

- To adopt the characteristics and methods of others in a positive, willing, and prudent manner, provided these are beneficial to the human race.
- To nourish the world, the human race, and their universal interdependence, by understanding the richness and expansiveness of the Dharma, provided we possess an exalted aspiration.
- To accept civilization and its advances that enlighten self and others, by taking actions that are harmonious, reciprocal, and communicative, provided we have a righteous heart and a sincere mind.

If we all could follow Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s teaching and guiding, we can achieve individual harmony. Then, within our sights are interpersonal, family, society harmony, and the final, world harmony and peace.

Session One Group One

Reflections on Ven. Master Hsing Yun's "Five Harmonies"

By Prof. Bee Scherer, PhD (Canterbury/Kyōto)

Ven. Master Hsing Yun's teachings on the five harmonies 五和 (*wǔhé*) is founded on a central Classic Chinese thought: harmony (和 *hé*) features in Chinese culture most prominently in Neo-Confucian philosophy. Master Hsing Yun exemplifies his usage of *skillful means*, reinfusing this widely engrained concept resourcefully with Buddhist meaning *for the Human World* (人間 *rénjiān*).

First, *individual harmony* (“harmony in one own's mind” 自心和 *zì xīn hé*) is denoted by a key Buddhist term that points to self-cultivation and transformation on the path to enlightenment: 樂 *lè* (joy, happiness).

In Classical Buddhist translation literature *lè* is used to render Sanskrit *sukha* (happiness) in the sense of better conditions for liberation.

Moreover, as “resting in mind itself”, the first harmony is really the foundation for the following four that then exemplify the Buddhist core teaching of interdependency in ever expanding, concentric spheres: from the personal to family, state/society and the world.

The latter three are classical Confucian groupings. Again, Master Hsing Yun skilfully utilises popular Confucian thought (respect, humility, etc.) in order to make his teaching for peace (平 *píng*) legible and accessible in the Sino-sphere and beyond.

Session One Group Two

By Dr. Jonathan Mair (Kent)

Hello. My name is Dr Jonathan Mair, thank you for the invitation to speak at this event. I am very happy to be able to take part. I am a social anthropologist, which means that I study culture by meeting people and taking part in their activities. In recent years I have been using this method to study Humanistic Buddhism as taught by Master Hsing Yun and Fo Guang Shan. Today as I have only a very short time, I will focus on one thing that I have learned about the way in which Fo Guang Shan promotes harmony at different levels or scales. In short: it is that practising cooperation with other people in very simple or even mundane activities can promote harmony at every scale. Let me explain what I mean with an example.

One of the activities I have been researching is called the short-term monastic retreat (短期出家). This activity takes place in various temples around the world once or twice a year and lasts seven days. For this period, up to a thousand participants are sealed in the temple precincts and have no communication with the outside world, no access to mobile phones or computers, and observe a discipline of noble silence. They live as novice monks or nuns. They are organised into small teams of about a dozen people. They will spend all their time with their teammates, even sleeping in dormitories with them, but they will not know anything about them because they cannot speak to them!

During the retreat, much of the participants' time is spent on simple tasks like weeding a garden, cleaning toilets, or even practising walking or eating in an elegant fashion--always in their teams. As they do this, the retreat supervisors will remind them to concentrate on their task and on their minds.

Together with my colleague, Professor James Laidlaw, of the University of Cambridge, I have participated in the retreat twice, and we also interviewed former participants. What we found through experience and from the interviews is that cooperation on these simple, repetitive tasks gave rise to constant feelings of irritation, intolerance and envy. We found that those feelings were an obstacle to harmonious cooperation. By staying silent and turning our attention inwards to our minds, we participants improved our awareness of these reactions. And having recognised them it was easy to dispel them, replacing them with feelings of compassion.

After the retreat, our interviewees told us that doing this kind of practice for only a week had a great effect on their ability to get on with other people. Husbands said they quarrelled with their wives less. Workers said they argued with their bosses less. Several people told us that they found they were resisting the urge to respond angrily to annoying emails, cutting short a possible cycle of retribution.

Master Hsing Yun teaches that the same skill -- being aware of aggressive feelings and the ability to overcome them -- are at the heart of solutions for problems of disharmony at every level.

Cultivating harmony in this way can help with problems as local as our frustrations with ourselves or our families to global challenges such as achieving world peace. For example, in 'Environmental and Spiritual Preservation', Master Hsing Yun has made a strong case that environmental problems have spiritual causes -- greed, envy and competitiveness.

In conclusion, our research on Fo Guang Shan ethical practices shows that Humanistic Buddhism as taught by Master Hsing Yun is an important resource for the world because it provides some practical methods for understanding and controlling the sources of disharmony and for promoting harmony at every level.

Thank you!

NI Haiying: Thanks, Jon! Interestingly, you noticed our cultivation in daily cooperation and our simple chores during the retreat. I believe it helped us to carry our practice in the temple with us when we returned to the secular world. It did not like the more religious practice which must have our venerable masters' guidance.

I have a question on the possibility of our practice cross-cultural development. In the Short-term Retreat in Paris, we all noticed the majority of our attendants were culturally Chinese. Do you agree the cultivation in FGS is 'too much' Chinese, and it might be not easy to attract people having no interest in this culture?

Dr. Mair: Some venerable masters had expressed similar worries on this problem. For example, they were concern the requirement might be too strict for some 'westerners'. I heard some non-Chinese did like the 'strictness'. You know not only Chinese Buddhism has the tradition of ascetic practices. Those who like this style felt a great enjoyment, a sense of achievement, during the retreat. So, I'd like to 'upgrade' your question into how FGS could attract more people beyond Chinese society. Here we can see the value of social anthropology studies – we could discover more categories. This could be not just 'Chinese'/'Non-Chinese', but also something similar to an 'ascetic' style which attracting people across cultures.

Session One Group Three

By Prof. Will Tuladhar-Douglas

First let me thank Venerable You Wang and Venerable Miao Lung and my friends and colleagues in BLIA and FGS for helping make this auspicious event possible, and of course Venerable Master Hsing Yun for creating the context within which we can have this excellent conversation.

Prof. Bee Scherer has already done a fine job of expanding Venerable Master's ideas on the five harmonies in his eloquent commentary, and Dr. Mair has opened up the possibility of using social anthropology to explore how ritual and meditation are used together to create a lived and practical harmony during FGS retreats.

It falls to me to explore ask how we can use the insights contained in Venerable Master Hsing Yun's formulation of the five harmonies to address the ecological, economic, political and social crisis that we call the 'environmental crisis'.

Along with Prof. Scherer, I am struck by the way in which Venerable Master Hsing Yun has used Neo-Confucian categories to build a Buddhist ethical framework. It is a fine example of 'matching terms' or 'skilful means', and as formulated it appropriates familiar Chinese categories such as 人 and 敬 for Buddhist analysis.

The environmental crisis is, I would argue, a crisis whose causes and scale cannot be grasped or addressed using Confucian terms. Within Confucian thought, the scale of being runs from 人, the good individual, through 家庭, the family, to 世界 the world as a whole, imagined as the greatest collection of human and divine interests. For Buddhists, however, the world is a vast collection of beings, the *sattvaloka*, contained within a material universe (*bhājanaloka*) that is the product of their karma.

The boundary between those is often questioned, especially in Chan riddles and poetry: mountains are enlightened, trees are enlightened. With this in mind, let us look at some of the specific harmonies Venerable Master Hsing Yun has propounded and ask how they help us understand our responsibilities in an ecological context.

In a more detailed commentary on the five harmonies within the Fo Guang Shan Dictionary of Buddhism, the self is compared to a factory that can produce good or bad feelings. For biologists, this idea of the self as a complex system makes sense—and we ourselves contain many different kinds of cell, some human and some endosymbionts that live on our skin or in our digestive tract. Indeed, we know that there is a link between mood, depression, and the health of the gut biome. All of these have to work in harmony for human health. Even before we have left the human body, we are in the domain of ecology!

At the level of the family, Venerable Master stresses the idea of diversity within harmony—again, an important concept in ecology. In interpersonal relationships Venerable Master uses the notion of 敬, respect. This is a skilful borrowing of Confucian ideals of respecting the elder—yet we humans are new arrivals on this planet. Termites, fungi, crocodiles, pine trees are all immeasurably older than we newly emerged and arrogant apes. Is it 敬 to cut down one's ancestors and burn them to fuel cars and jet aeroplanes for leisure? Certainly not!

Once we see the potential for ecological ethics within the five harmonies, they become a powerful instrument for re-imagining our proper behaviour as humble, generous and joyful beings in a diverse, harmonious environmental system.

By Ricky Wong

He is the President of London Buddhism Research Support Group, had an open dialogue with Prof. Dr. Will Tuladhar-Douglas regarding the concept of the "Five Harmonies" in his perspective. The discussion was based on Prof. Dr. Douglas's professional field and experience in ethnic medicine and ecology in Asian Buddhist societies for over 25 years.

During the dialogue, Ricky raised the questions on "how we can think of using Five Harmonies to benefit the society with the concept of Ecological Buddhism?" and "how does Venerable Master Hsing Yun's concept of Five Harmonies connects to his previous fieldwork?". Prof. Dr. Will gave audience another insight to view the "Five Harmonies" ecological Buddhist perspective. This extension provided awareness on the environmental crisis in today's society.

In Session two, Ricky was the host for the topic of "Interfaith Dialogue to Promote Religious Harmony". It was followed by discussions among Muslim, Hindu, and Jewish clergy members. At the end of this session, seven young researchers from the London Buddhism Research Support Group of Fo Guang Shan London reported their research on Venerable Master Hsing Yun's concept of "Five Harmonies" and Humanistic Buddhism.

Session One Group Four

By Rajnish Kashyap and Kyra Li

Kyra: What are the main commonalities between Buddhism and Hinduism?

Rajnish: Hinduism's origin can trace back to the prehistoric era with this ancient scripture dating back more than 4,000 years. However, no specific point of origin can be cited while it is its roots can see in ancient India, which has been recognized as the oldest living major religion. It was not founded with a religious perspective.

Hinduism primarily originated as a set of rules or regulations to help people lead a disciplined life. This set of rules adhered to the fulfilment of duties, moral values and the importance of self-realization through meditation. It is not confined to the teaching of a specific person or a single deity. It is polytheistic in the practice of worshipping innumerable Gods each corresponding to either natural power or representation of the central moral value or quality.

That is what phases of Hinduism. You asked me about what are the common things between Buddhism and Hinduism? I think that to answer this question and we need to go back to one thing, which is the origin of Hinduism and the origin of Buddhism are both from India, and it has a philosophy based on eastern tradition. The fundamental principle and concept of Hinduism are very much interrelated with one of Buddhism as well. The evaluation of the individual mind and personality is more important in the Hindu value system than faith or religion. It is because of the importance it is to the value in Grain in all religions. It is along with Buddhism, often referred to as the most secular religion in the world.

As for key beliefs, Hinduism has many schools of thought. There is variation in local practices and worshipping of protocol deities between Hinduism and Buddhism. However, there is a central common thing that you will unify as one tradition. The core of tradition in Hinduism is dharma, the underlying universal life that encompasses Buddhism's existence, which may be worshipped in a personal form such as Vishnu Shiva.

In Hinduism, the third fundamental principle of individualism it allows people to develop and grow at their own pace by making different spiritual paths available to them. It allows various schools of thought under Its broad principles. Hinduism grants absolute and complete freedom of belief and worship Hinduism both as a religion and is a way of life the sets of rules for a

good living or Dharmic living that have been laid down constitute the Hindu religion.

There are other principles like karma and dharma—additionally, the belief in the incarnation, Moksha, which is Nirvana in Buddhism. Many people specialize in Buddhism, what I can say is that both traditions came out from the faith traditions many many thousand years ago. So there is an interrelationship there and both based on a similar sort of principle. I think we believe in the same kind of thing.

Kyra: In Buddhism, there is a view and understanding that all things are connected. As such, Buddhism strives to view the connection between all things and to understand that these things are in fact interconnected. Therefore, through this understanding Buddhists can see how there are interconnectedness and Harmony for all things. Venerable Hsing Yun said that “Harmony has a universal value and is the most precious in the world. Without it, even if we have money, wealth, and love, we still have nothing.” Starting from ourselves, beginning from individual harmony that is achieved through joy, we can then expand harmony to include our family and society, and naturally, there would be world peace. This is very like what you just said about the harmony in every religion.

Session One Group Five

By LIN Zuqiang (Paris) and Tracy Liu (Cambridge)

Ladies and Gentlemen and Dear friends,

I am LIN Zuqiang. It's a great honor for me to join you here today on occasion of World Interfaith Harmony Week organized by the United Nations to talk about the promotion of world peace and harmony by interfaith synergy.

We are at a turning point of history.

People ask for social justice.

With the arrival of the digital technology and the consequent revolution of production, service and social life organization, a balanced and just wealth distribution become a key preoccupation of contemporary world. History reminds us how the 18th century French revolution happened. That painful memory highlights the importance a better social harmony through social justice.

We need to listen to the voice of people.

People ask for systematic sustainability.

The world needs a sustainable governance system to defend a sustainable environment, a sustainable demand and offer model, a sustainable education, a sustainable housing, a sustainable medical care, a sustainable eldercare.

The systematic sustainability is the foundation of the continuity of peace, love, security, happiness and prosperity of our world and the efforts to promote, to build and to push the systematic sustainability will be our legacy for our children and grandchildren.

We need to listen to the voice of people.

People ask for an improved capacity to face world emergencies, such as natural disasters, like wildfire, and epidemic crisis, such as coronavirus. The world can no longer afford to collective panics, to administrative ignorance. We need greater world cooperation because we share the same destiny as a great community.

We need to listen to the voice of people.

If we can offer ourselves a prepared synergy and world cooperation to satisfy people's need for social justice, systematic sustainability, and a coordinated world efforts to improve the major crisis management, the actual values, the actual system which support the functioning of our world community will sustain and will resist better this uncomfortable instable and unpredictable world situation. Being unstable and being unpredictable mean that we are at danger of losing peace and love.

At this turning point of history, the interfaith synergy is an important "love and peace" united force to enlighten world consciousness and encourage the world cooperation, both of governmental cooperation and civil cooperation, to listen to people's voice and work on social justice, systematic sustainability and more adapted capacity to face world emergencies.

Our friends from Fo Guang Shan, the temple of humanistic Buddhism created and led by Venerable Master Hsing Yun made a great demonstration of tremendous potential of an interfaith synergy.

The idea of "Oneness and coexistence" , which means multiple different branches living together within a same body, is perfectly compatible with a popular international relation philosophy promoted by China, which is defined as "a Community with a shared future for mankind".

In terms of Social justice, the Venerables from Fo Guang Shan went to Brazil, India to help the younger generation from families of low social-economic status to go to school. In terms of systematic sustainability, they promote environmental protection, ecology in Paris, in London, in Lisbon, in Malaysia, etc. Facing the world emergencies, they offered the help to repair the damage caused by the fire at Notre Dame de Paris Cathedral. They offered prayers for the victims of terrorist attacks in Paris.

And Fo Guang Shan Buddhists are not alone. They work with Catholics, with protestants, with Jewish, with Muslims to find a common understanding of love, compassion and peace. They sing together, they dance together, they show art works together and they pray together. And very often their interfaith gatherings were coordinated through UNESCO interfaith initiatives.

The interfaith synergy from the perspective of Fo Guang Shan led by venerable Master Hsing Yun showed us a great confidence on the world religious community's ongoing and future contribution to the social justice, systematic sustainability and improvement of capacity to face world emergencies.

As both Venerable Master Hsing Yun from Buddhist community and Pope Francis from Catholic Church showed their concerns on and prayed respectively for the coronavirus victims during last days, we can only be more confident with the interfaith synergy's united force.

This united force is in perfect harmonies: personal harmony, interpersonal harmony, family harmony, social harmony and world harmony, the five harmonies promoted by the Venerable master Hsing Yun and his Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Temple.

Thank you!

Tracy Liu: Thank you so much Mr. Lin for sharing how Fo Guang Shan has contributed to inter-faith dialogues. Now, it is my turn to continue this topic and deep into "oneness and coexistence" mentioned by Ven. You Wang and how they are related to some cutting-edge discussions in social anthropology.

I am a PhD student from the University of Cambridge. My research interest is focusing on the globalization and localization of Fo Guang Shan. Currently, I am preparing a long-term study of Fo Guang Shan in Catholic Philippines. It is very interesting to look at how Buddhism encounters with Catholicism because this kind of inter-faith dialogue is happening almost every day in the local context. Here, I want to mention the case of "life education" carried out in Guang Ming College. This special college was founded by Master Hsing Yun. Even though it is founded by a Buddhist master, almost all the students are non-Buddhists with diversified religious backgrounds. They are Roman Catholics, Christians, Muslims and so forth.

Here, "life education" which parallels with the Socratic question of "How should one live", aims at a win-win relation between self and others. The college encourages students to achieve a well-rounded personhood and meaningful life through interpersonal harmony and consideration for others. Students come from diversified cultural and religious backgrounds, and "harmony" becomes extremely important because the issue of "ethics across borders" in "anthropology of ethics" becomes much more realistic in such an ethnographic context. Borders are formed by ethical differences, cultural differences and value differences.

Facing with differences and working on strategies to make border transcendence possible, what Master Hsing Yun provides is a concept called "oneness and co-existence". "Oneness" can be understood as "we are one". It means equality and tolerance. We have differences but Humanistic Buddhism says human beings are all equal because all of us have the possibility to gain wisdom and enlightenment in the future. "Co-existence" means the vision of loving-kindness and compassion, the ability to put oneself in the shoes of others.

Here, I borrow the perspective from “anthropology of the good”, which is put forward by Prof. Joel Robbins, to make a further discussion. Robbins believes that people have different understandings of values caused by different cultures and religions, but different definitions of the good equally exist which form into a colorful picture called “value pluralism”. These high level of definitions of the good or we say values, support human flourishing. Therefore, the idea of “oneness” promotes equal positions of value differences, and “co-existence” works as the high level of definition of the good in Humanistic Buddhist context in which it promotes compassion and benefiting self through benefiting others.

In Fo Guang Shan Philippines context, “oneness and co-existence” is embodied in practical cultivation such as “doing good deeds, speaking good words, and thinking good thoughts” in order to “give other joyfulness, confidence, hope and convenience”. Students from Guang Ming College make individual choice and accept Buddhism as beneficial values which flourish their own meaningful life. This sort of inter-faith dialogue happens inside individuals. Humanistic Buddhist wisdom becomes an alternative choice and provides new strategies to make life meaningful.

Returning to the topic of this forum, I want to say that humanistic concept of “we are one” connects each one of us in the world as an integral unity for mankind. Different cultures and religions exist equally and constitute a colorful picture. Because of differences, we can have a wide range of values flourishing human life. Each one of them can be transformed into an alternative choice and provides new perspectives to each other.

Thank you for listening!

Session Two Speech Collection

Welcome Speech by Venerable Man Kuang

Good evening to everyone joining me on Skype! I am Man Kuang from Fo Guang Shan Dallas Temple in Texas, United States. All of us are from different parts of the world, gathering here to talk about the same idea: Harmony. This really makes this occasion magnificent.

Harmony is actually the Buddha's teaching of the Middle Path, which is a necessary guide to our modern world. Harmony is essential between nations, various ethnic groups, every sector of our society and political party. Since each of us is different from one another, everyone needs to build up connections and relationships, which contributes to develop harmony among different people as an effective way to eliminate confrontation and conflict. The Buddhist Middle Way refers to the Buddha's enlightened view of life, and also the actions or attitudes that creates peace and happiness for oneself and others. In a broader sense, it's seeking the way of life that gives the greatest value to human existence, and also help relieve the world of suffering.

How do we cultivate or practice harmony? Venerable Master Hsing Yun, the founder of Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Order in Taiwan and a major propagator of Humanistic Buddhism mentioned these five points: harmony within oneself, harmony within the family, harmony with others, harmony with society and harmony with the wider world. Before we prepare to spread harmony in the world, balance finding in our own mind is the first thing we should do. By observing compassion and realizing all beings on earth are interdependent, we can eventually be free of the suffering originating in fear, anger and selfishness.

Through coexistence, we upgrade our minds by becoming more open-minded, fostering mutual respect and greater collaboration. In our daily lives, we recognize the importance of doing good things, saying good words and having good thoughts. We cherish generosity, embrace differences and share commonalities. We interact with others so that we can develop broad friendship or affinities. We outreach for participants in international exchanges so that we can understand and learn about more from various cultures and religions. These perspectives are not only for Buddhists, they are shared by all of mankind, universal truths.

We cannot exist alone in this world. We need the support of people from various fields, trades and professions. Without others, how are we going to survive as the human race? Venerable

Master Hsing Yun's Five Harmonies remind us no person, on community or country should be excluded in this Earth. Only through harmonious actions can we build a better world. Buddha once said: "In this world, hate never dispelled hate. Only love dispels hate." It is only by cultivating compassion and kindness for ourselves and others that we can maintain peace and harmony on earth.

Finally, I would like to say one further point. When Venerable Master Hsing Yun first move to Taiwan, people called him a "Chinese monk". Later when he revisited his hometown in China, the locals there called him a "Taiwanese monk". He then realized "Actually, every person is a member of one big family—the planet Earth we are living in". With this thought, he considered him as a "global citizen". Venerable Master Hsing Yun offers a profound example in the promoting of harmony among the human race.

Like among colourful flowers we appreciate in a garden, harmony is the beauty that different people create. All of us can contribute to relational harmony for the world.

Session Two Group One

By Dhruv Chhatralia

“On the spiritual path, all seekers have many questions, but the answer is always one. The answer is always one but there are many questions. The more the questions we have left unanswered then the more the turbulence, the more the problems and the more the disorders that arise. That which we call religion is nothing but the answers to questions that humans have asked. As the times have changed, the answers do not change. We have a very famous saying in Sanskrit:

Ekam sat viprā bohudā vadanti

The Truth is One but the ways of saying It are many

The Truth is One but the way of saying it changes because the questions change. The answer has remained what we call Sanāthan (without beginning). Then the person answering the question may be Shree Rām, Shree Krushna, Lord Buddha, Lord Māhāvīr, or anyone but the answer has remained One while the questions have changed. The main problems in today's times have only one answer. The first problem and question of today's times is pollution. There are many types of pollution such as water pollution, air pollution, sound pollution etc. There are many different types of pollutions. What is the answer to pollution? There is only one reason for why pollution arose. It arose because we do not have love towards nature. We do not love nature. But if we begin loving nature then no type of pollution will remain. The problem of pollution is very big. Millions of dollars are expended worldwide to reduce pollution but the reason behind pollution is one and that is that we do not love nature. The root reason is love. If there is love, then all types of pollution will be destroyed. The answer is one.

The second question we have is that there is poverty in society. There is exploitation and divisions between the haves and the have-nots. Why did this happen? Why is there poverty? The reason for this is that human beings do not have love towards other human beings. That is why there is poverty. The answer has remained the same: love. But if one person had love towards another person then would anybody be able to exploit another? No. Would anyone be able to let anyone else be poor? No poverty would remain. The answer has always been the same: love.

The third big question in today's times is war and genocide. Why do wars break out? We read every day in the newspaper that people were shot in the battlefield and so many people died. Why do wars happen? The answer is one and that is there are no feelings of love. Love towards life is not there. We do not love life. If we begin loving life then there would be no reason for war.

The fourth biggest problem of today is the strain in relations for example between a husband and wife, between father and son, between brothers, between friends, between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, between brothers and sisters etc. A strain has come in these relations. This is a very big problem and a problem that exists in every house. Why does this problem happen? It is because there are no feelings of love. Human beings do not have love towards themselves and human beings do not have love towards other human beings. If human beings just had love towards themselves then all the problems would be solved. If there is love then no problems would remain.

This one message of love is contained throughout the 700 verses of our great scripture the Bhagavad Gita, where in chapter 12 the love incarnate Himself, our beloved ShreeKrushna, describes the qualities of an ideal devotee. The first and foremost three qualities described were not going to the holy place, saying a certain prayer or performing a certain ritual, but they were the following: *advēṣṭā sarvabhūtanām maitraḥ karuṇa eva ca* (meaning “no ill will towards any being, friendliness and compassion”). Our organisation SHYAM have given over 340 talks on the Bhagavad Gita in the City of London in the last eight years, and these talks are now watched in 161 countries around the world, where people from all religions and backgrounds are committing to bring a transformation in their lives, to bring love to their lives and to the lives of other people. I will leave you with a few verses in Sanskrit from the Upanishads, which is every day repeated by millions of people in India, and which I believe represent the most powerful thought in the universe:

Aum sarve bhavantu sukhinah
sarve santu niraamayaah
sarve bhadraani pashyantu
maa kaschit dukha bhaagbhavet
Aum Shaanti Shaanti Shaanti
Aum may all be happy and prosperous,
may all be healthy;
may all see auspiciousness,
may none suffer.
Aum. Peace! Peace! Peace!

Session Two Group Two

By Imam Mansoor Ahmad Clarke

In the Name of God, the Most Gracious, Ever Merciful. My dearest brothers and sisters, my brief talk today is inspired by the words of my religious leader, His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad, the Worldwide Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, who for me and tens of millions of Muslims worldwide is a figure of remarkable truth and unwavering justice.

The beautiful global community we all live in is one in which people from a multitude of ethnicities, religions and beliefs live harmoniously alongside one another. Of course, we encounter trouble and conflict, but inherently we all desire the same thing- a communion with the Divine and a communion with one another as human beings. And so, we celebrate and honour the diversity of one another and allow each the freedom to find their own path to this communion.

And so after expressing gratitude to God, it is incumbent upon us to also thank all peoples and communities – be they Sikh, Hindu, Christian, Buddhist or any other – for their grace and open-heartedness and for fostering an atmosphere of harmony and cooperation between the different groups living in this world.

Let us not focus on that which divides us, but rather focus on our common humanity and morality. Let us remember that we are all children of God, and that our purpose is to worship Him by celebrating humanity and honouring the beautiful relationships we have with one another.

Those who fail to show love and sympathy to orphans or other vulnerable people or who threaten the peace of their society will find that their prayers and supplications lead to ignominy and disgrace, rather than success and salvation. That is the true form of religion, where our actions of worship lead us to live lives of higher function whilst spreading happiness, love and compassion in the world.

It is my belief that only a person who is caring, considerate and respectful to others will be considered a true worshipper of God and a true adherent to religion. It is therefore the religious duty of every believer of God to fulfil

Session Two Group Three

By Sarit Gafan

I was born Jewish, but my religion is Love, and these are my thoughts on the Five Harmonies, and how I have experienced them myself:

Joy within oneself can be cultivated through self-awareness, self-love and self-gratitude, appreciating the gifts that come to us as a result of our traits, even the ones we struggle with. For example, my highly active brain can make it difficult for me to concentrate at times, but it brings me amazing ideas and insights.

Co-operation with family - these relationships can be complex; you can end up in a subconscious culture of judgement and blame (both of yourself and your family). Instead, praying for them and for their healing reminds us that we all want the best for each other and returns us to a focus on love, peace and harmony, rather than the toxic emotions that may have arisen.

Respect between self and others can be developed by setting boundaries in a strong and kind way. For the highest good of all, developing an awareness of how people's energy is affected by what we say and do (including your own energy), and communicating this with honesty and kindness so that you can ensure boundaries and beliefs are respected and honoured.

Unity in society can be grown by actively seeking opportunities to serve humanity together. This naturally generates opportunities to learn from and about each other, especially misconceptions. I had first-hand experience of this when I had the privilege of joining hands with the London Fo Guang Shan and Al Manaar Mosque communities in a Light Up A Life interfaith cooking event to serve the Grenfell Tower community in 2018. A service user asked me where I was from, and when I told her I was from Israel, she said "Big nose!". While at first, I was shocked, I realised that this may have been the first time she had met someone Jewish, so we had a brief and gentle chat where I challenged the stereotype that all Jewish people have big noses – there was a language barrier so we did not go into this in detail, or how I felt. I feel that Fo Guang Shan is setting the standard for this work, and I look forward to joining hands with them and our other friends across all faiths and none to grow this beautiful energy.

Peace throughout the world can be cultivated in many ways. My initial ideas are to hold more collective prayer and meditation sessions, especially with a specific, shared intention. For

example, the praying and singing with the Fo Guang Shan community, using the prayer that Master Hsing Yun sent out for safety from the Coronavirus, was very comforting and uplifting – once again the focus on healing and safety returns us to a focus on the light in this world, both Divine and human. We could hold interfaith prayer sessions, where each faith could share prayers in their own languages and with their own methods, and then at the end we could chant together the universal healing song, ‘Love, Peace and Harmony’ (received from Heaven by Master Zhi Gang Sha, whose teachings are mainly from the Tao, but he respects all religions, as do I).

Finally, we could join hands to create interfaith libraries in hospitals, prisons and doctors’ surgeries – I know that Fo Guang Shang has already been donating books to schools and universities. In Judaism, we have the Zohar, which is the main text of the Kabbalah, the spiritual and mystical teachings. This book has healing and protective qualities I have experienced first-hand, and its mere presence could help generate healing energy in places where darkness is prevalent. If we could gather texts from across the faiths to create interfaith libraries, they could create great energy centres, even if people do not read the books – just imagine all these Divine words of peace and positivity joining hands next to each other, wishing healing for humanity!

Session Two Group Four

(Sharing by Members of LBRSG)

By Chris Du

I would like to share my observations about the design of Fo Guang Shan's temples, which has reflected the master's philosophy of "Five Harmony".

The main shine of Fo Guang Shan temple was built on the top of a mountain and master instructed the builder to make each step of the stair leading to the main shine lower and wilder. And also included step free access alone both sides of the walkway. This is not a common design in Asian Buddhist temple. detail shows master always have the devotee's welfare in mind and match master's motto "give people convenient".

Another example of master's philosophy of Harmony is that the newly constructed temple in Paris is embracing a very modern design which looks like a designer museum. It maybe unconventional but Personally I will see this as a break thought and making peace harmony with culture of 20 century western world.

Last but not least, London Fo Guang Shan is operating in the building of a former Christian institute. Many of the figure of the other religious still remain, we can still see the old name plate of Christian Institutes in the front corridor and cross symbol in the ceilings. Fo Guang Shan following master Hsing Yun's philosophy can work harmoniously with other religions under one roof.

By Connie Suluhihana

Venerable Master Hsing Yun has created an inspiring platform from which we can both gain knowledge and be of help to others, and so I am looking into how FGS Humanistic Buddhist practices impact well-being in young and early adults in the UK. Being in a time and an environment where everybody seems busy and it's clear that the stresses of life can negatively impact well-being, my research uses both BCOPE (Buddhist Coping Measures – Phillips et al) and semi-structured interviews to look into the coping strategies of both Buddhist and non-Buddhist.

With this knowledge, I'm hoping that we can take some of these key practices/coping strategies and see if they can benefit people both in and outside FGS in maintaining a healthier sense of well-being from a Humanistic Buddhist perspective.

By Linjie Su (Yolanda)

The relationship between the practice of compassion and five harmonies in Humanistic Buddhism.

Compassion and loving-kindness are the foundation of all the Dharma and Wisdom of Buddhism, which enable people to actively perceive the happiness and trauma of the sentient beings and encourage them to help others leave suffering and attain bliss. In traditional Buddhism, compassion developed based on the principle of “unconditional kindness and universal-empathetic compassion”. Venerable Master Hsing Yun has supplemented the principle of practicing the Three Acts of Goodness, Four Givings, and Five Harmonies, which contributed to constructing the new cultivation and practice of compassion in daily life, and also enhanced the relationship between the religious-spiritual heritage of Buddhism and the new generations. This principle is guiding the more achievable and acceptable practice of kindness and compassion in modern life and emphasizes the coexist and harmony of diverse religions and perspectives in the world.

By Ming Lin

We probably all know about Master Hsing Yun as a Chinese Buddhist monk, the founder of the Fo Guang Shan Buddhist order as well as the affiliated Buddha's Light International Association in Taiwan. Indeed, there is so much information online that you can find and read to know about Master Hsing Yun, and these definitely tell a better story than I do. When Venerable Miao Lung asked me to give a short talk about Master Hsing Yun, I felt honoured. As I have never met Master Hsing Yun in person, therefore, I decided to explain who is Master Hsing Yun through the books which I read and written by him, and his disciples and students who I met in London FGS temple. As these could be a good reflection to show who Master Hsing Yun truly is.

In the book “Hear Me Out – My Way of Management”, he dedicated his life to propagating Humanistic Buddhism. As a global citizen, he continues to foster joy and harmony, oneness and coexistence, respect and tolerance, and equality and peace throughout the world. Master Hsing

Yun started off from zero, with limited educational background and financial resources, by uniting the public with caring and love, he managed to set up 5 universities as well as over 200 temples all around the world, in order to provide more educational opportunities to the public.

I was unfortunately struck by the lowest point of my life about 2 years ago. I felt so lost and helpless. Growing up in a Buddhist family, I decided to pay a visit to the temple. I came here looking for inner peace, but what I gained is more than that. I now have a family away from home. The moment Venerable Miao Lung saw me, it was as if she could read my mind, she kindly invited me over for a chat. Since then, she has provided unconditional supports, both mentally and physically, and helped me go through those days. This has reflected the teachings of Master Hsing Yun on selflessness.

From Master Hsing Yun disciples and students, his teachings on kind and compassion can be seen. I hope as part of Fo Guang Shan temple, I will be able to continue Master Hsing Yun teachings and to help as many people as I can by promoting Humanistic Buddhism.

By WANG Zhe

My main talking points:

1. Master Hsing Yun always puts a strong focus on using modern technology to facilitate the spread of Buddhism and Buddhism education.
2. One way to expand the breadth of Buddhism education is to build digital platform so that more people can participate in Buddhism courses.
3. In a paper we are about to publish, we explored a few different teaching methods and compared the pros and cons, we then discuss the detailed implementation of an online Buddhism college in Europe.

By Alex Yu

Alex Yu shared her experience of meeting Venerable Master Hsing Yun when participating the International Youth Seminar on Life and Ch'an in Taiwan. Venerable Master Hsing Yun inspired her to develop herself and make a positive impact to all beings surrounding her. She firmly believes that if all humans from different backgrounds could respect, accept and understand each other, the world harmony will be reached sooner or later.

By Maggie Wong

Maggie Wong, the Vice-president of London Buddhism Research Support Group, shared about how Venerable Master Hsing Yun achieving world harmony through charitable ways, in relation to the international community projects undertaking in Brazil, the Philippines and South Africa.

Under the guidance of Venerable Master Hsing Yun, Zu Lai Temple in Brazil established “The Sons of Zu Lai” project to provide shelter and activities for children from the slums in 2003. The project provides supplementary education for children aged 6 to 17, offering free courses – ranging from educational courses to the establishment of a neighbourhood football club.

In the Philippines, Ven. Master saw the artistic and performing talents of the Filipinos, and so he decided to establish a college that integrates Buddhism and Art to nurture local talents, called the Guang Ming College. The greatest and most well-known performance from Guang Ming College called “Siddhartha the Musical”.

In South Africa, the Nan Hua Performing Arts Group established in 2013, gives hope, joy, confidence, and convenience to a group of less fortunate and underprivileged African girls aged between 18 and 25 within the local community. As a result from their learning, they now travel around the world to share with people the vibrant, eye catching performances, which includes roller skate dragon dance and “The thousand Hands Drum”. They have been presented in Taiwan at Fo Guang Shan Headquarter and at the South Africa’s Got Talent. One such achievement in March 2018, the team was invited to participate at the UN Women’s Commission on the Status of Women Conference in the USA. On stage, each member showed their skill and talent. Their song and dance performance lit not only the stage, but the hearts of all those who watched. They told simple yet elegant stories of their lives that contained a spectrum of emotions.

These teachings are to enlighten and purify people, and provide guidance in practicing the concept of Humanistic Buddhism. Ven. Master has been spreading the Dharma through charitable ways in his lifetime. The act from Ven. Master shows that his initiatives are open-minded, regardless the gender, religion beliefs, nationalities, and races.

These international projects helped children to develop self-esteem and improve their educational level despite their background. Ven. Master spreading loving-kindness equally all over the world, not hoping for anything in return, but the better future of children that transform their lives, and in turn can help the others in future and contribute to a better society.

Throughout his life, the Ven. Master has dedicated himself to propagating the ideals of "Humanistic Buddhism", to bring harmony and peace among all the living being around the world. Ven. Master has gained international prestige for his selfless dedication and contributions. The concept of "Five Harmonies" contains five steps, serving as a gateway for many to bring peace and compassion into their lives.