



Origin of Initiation



Dr. Rey-Sheng Her

Deputy Chief Executive Officer,
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This Yin Cheng distinguished lecture series on Buddhism aims to describe the outstanding contribution of the Venerable Cheng Yen and her Mentor, the Venerable Yin Shun, to the philosophy and practice of Buddhism in the modern world. The modernity of Buddhism has been a big topic for Buddhist practitioners and scholars. I think we may all believe that religion has to respond to the needs of people and the present, as the Ven. Yin Shun told the Ven. Cheng Yen before her ordination, "for Buddhism and sentient beings."

Buddhism emphasizes compassion and altruism; this great legacy has lasted over 2,000 years and enriched human beings worldwide. Nonetheless, we are now in a world where conflicts between races, nationalities, rich and poor, humans and nature are intensifying. Every Buddhist leader is exploring ways how the wisdom and compassion of Buddhism can resolve these conflicts and bring peace and well-being to all sentient beings. The Yin Cheng lecture series will explore and examine the ideas and models of modern Buddhist practices to achieve its paramount goal.

One hundred years ago, when China and many other Asian countries faced the existential challenge of the survival of their nations and faiths, Buddhism had less strength. Yet both the Venerable Tai Shu and the Venerable Yin Shun advocated and elaborated humanistic Buddhism, which applies the wisdom and compassion of Buddha to the secular world. It created the beginning of Humanistic Buddhism. The Ven. Yin Shun drew up a comprehensive theory of humanistic Buddhism, and his disciple the Ven. Cheng Yen has put these theories into practice and realized the original ideals of Buddhism.

Since it started five decades ago, Tzu Chi has brought its four missions -- charity, medicine, education, and cultural humanity -- to over 126 countries and regions. It successfully accommodates different races and



religions to work together to provide love to the needy. "Eradicate their suffering and bring them wisdom," as the Infinite Meaning of Sutra proclaims. Many of Tzu Chi's recipients eventually become volunteers and give alms to their own communities, thus creating a cycle of love and proving the idea of equality. As Buddha said, there should be no giver, no recipient, and no giving itself; this testifies to the ultimate purpose of equality of all sentient beings. The Tzu Chi School of Buddhism is one of many Buddhist organizations seeking to realize the ideals of Buddha in contemporary society. It aims to create a realm of the secular world that conveys the purity of the human mind and social harmony and make the world free from disasters. Buddhism in our time has to believe that, through compassionate altruism, Buddhists can reach the ultimate enlightenment.

Some may say that it might be too late for philosophy to change the world. However, we hope this lecture series shall contribute to this goal from an academic perspective.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Professor Jinhua Chen for helping to initiate this lecture series. My appreciation mainly goes to all our partners who have worked to achieve this goal altogether, including Princeton University, Harvard University, Cambridge University, Columbia University, Beijing University, Oxford University, and the University of British Columbia.

To carry the legacy of these two Buddhist saints, the Ven. Yin Shun and the Ven. Cheng Yen, we take the first step with this start of this lecture series. Thank you also for all the support from UBC Vicky and Carol, Lorna from Harvard CAMLab, the staff of Tzu Chi foundation and many others who helped to make this event happen. May the Yin Cheng Distinguished Lecture Series on Buddhism have great success for years to come.





The Opening



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Respected Dharma Master Cheng Yen and all respected Venerable, Distinguished Scholars, executive members of Tzu Chi and all Tzu Chi volunteers worldwide, ladies and gentlemen.

Good Morning, Good Afternoon and Good Evening:

We welcome you all to join the launch ceremony of the Yin-Cheng Distinguished Lecture Series on Buddhism. This series will describe the profound contribution of Dharma Master Cheng Yen and her Mentor, Dharma Master Yin Shun, and aims to promote academic studies of contemporary Buddhism.

Last year, when I mentioned to Professor Jinhua Chen a lecture series on modern Buddhism based on the legacy of Dharma Master Cheng Yen and her Mentor, Dharma Master Yin Shun, he replied at once: “Yes, we should go for it.” We invited partner universities to join this great academic event. We have Beijing University, Cambridge University, Columbia University, Harvard University, Oxford University, Princeton University and University of British Columbia, Canada.

At our first steering committee meeting, members of the seven universities and the Tzu Chi Foundation all agreed to use Yin Cheng as the name of our lecture series on Buddhism and concentrate on contemporary Buddhism. I reported to Dharma Master Cheng Yen and CEO Yen Po-wen about this event and was grateful to receive their support. Sponsored by the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation and in partnership with the seven universities, we are now glad to announce the start of this series.

The Central Steering Committee of the Yin Cheng Distinguished Lecture series agreed to organize one lecture each month. This pilot series will run from September 2021 to March 2022. It will begin at Cambridge on



YIN-CHENG

Distinguished Lecture Series on BUDDHISM



the 20th of September, and the speaker is Professor Eugene Wang from Harvard University. He is the founder of CAMLab Chinese Art and Media Laboratory. The second lecture will be given in October at Harvard University and so on every month.

The main purpose of this lecture series is to deepen the research and discussion of modern Buddhism, its philosophy, practices, model of governance worldwide and its interplay with different professions and civilizations. We hope that this series shall next year provide a Journal, Symposium and website, to spread understanding and theoretical explanation of modern Buddhism. It also hopes to contribute to the academic field of Buddhism and enrich the development of Buddhism in our time. This is the dream and long-term objective of Dharma Master Yin Shun and Dharma Master Cheng Yen.

Let's start today's event by watching a short film that briefly introduce the affinity and ideal of these two great Buddhist saints to guide the Buddhism and its application to the modern world.

