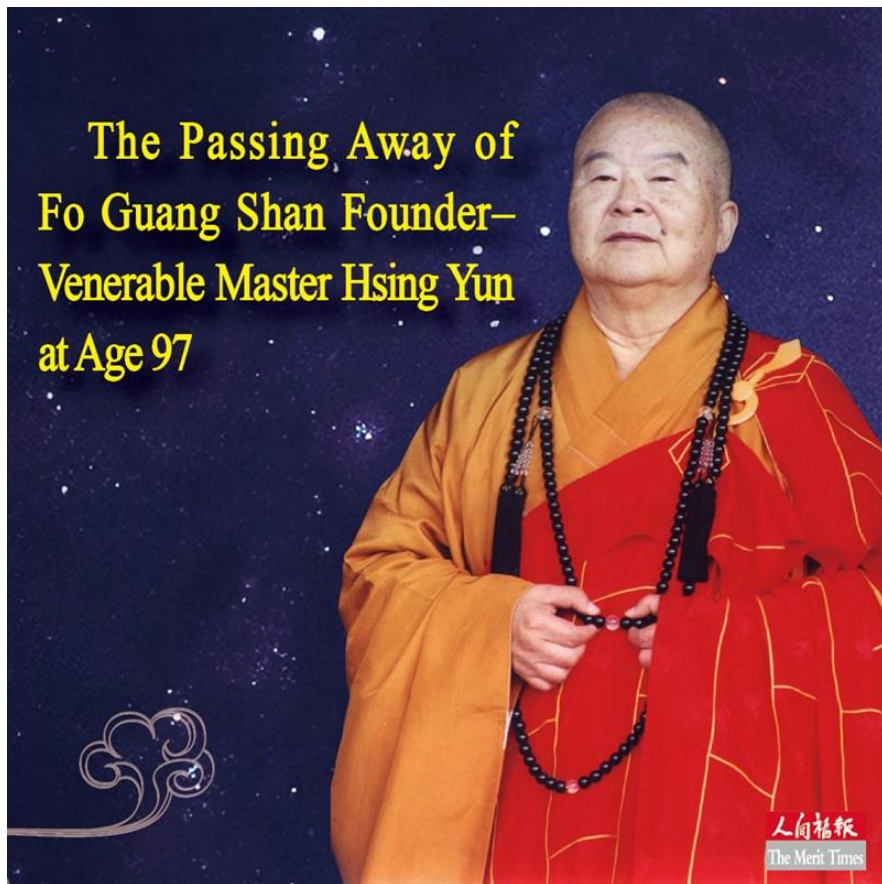


# The Passing Away of Fo Guang Shan Founder – Venerable Master Hsing Yun at Age 97

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/ Fo Guang Shan

On the morning of February 6th, 2023, at 5 AM, as dawn broke, a thousand monastic and lay members of the Fo Guang Shan Order knelt in the Main Shrine Courtyard of Fo Guang Shan Monastery, listening to the solemn announcement made by Most Ven. Hsin Bau, Chairperson of the Fo Guang Shan Board of Directors. Ven. Master Hsing Yun, the founder of the Fo Guang Shan Order,

passed away at age 97, on February 5th, 2023 at 5 PM, amidst the solemn chanting of the Buddha's name in the Founders Quarters at the Fo Guang Shan Light Transmission Building.

With great sadness and sorrow, the congregation mourned the loss of such an eminent Buddhist Master. Faced with the reality that his heavenly and human eyes of wisdom have now closed, and his ferry of wisdom has now sunk, they prayed for his swift rebirth into this world.

Venerable Master Hsing Yun devoted his life to the propagation of Humanistic Buddhism and the realization of the Fo Guang Pure Land. In the past 56 years since the founding of Fo Guang Shan, he had established over 300 temples worldwide and founded five universities in Taiwan, USA, Australia, and the Philippines, as well as the Buddha's Light International Association with millions of members. Countless people have benefited from his compassionate endeavors.

Venerable Master Hsing Yun's life is epitomized in the following verse:

*With a heart filled with compassion and vows to save others,  
My body is like the ocean of the dharma, unbound;  
Should you ask what have I achieved in this lifetime?  
Peace and happiness now shine over the five continents.*



**Born in Jiangdu, Jiangsu, he lived as a global citizen**

Venerable Master Hsing Yun was born in Jiangdu, Jiangsu Province, in 1927. He grew up in poverty and at the age of 12 accompanied his mother to Nanjing to search for his father but to no avail. As they passed Nanjing Qixia Monastery, he met Venerable Master Zhi Kai and became tonsured under him. At the age of 15, he received full ordination at the monastery under Most Venerable Ruoshun. His ancestral temple is Yixing Dajue Temple in Yixing, Jiangsu and he was given the Dharma name Wuche and the moniker Jingjue, as the 48th Patriarch of the Linji School and the founding Patriarch of the Fo Guang Order.

For over 80 years, Venerable Master endeavored to propagate the Dharma as a global citizen, inspiring and forever changing the lives of many. He was followed by over two thousand monastic disciples and millions of followers worldwide. He had also ordained over one hundred Dharma heirs to continue his teachings.

In 1967, he founded Fo Guang Shan, on a bamboo-filled hilltop located in the humble Dashu district of Kaohsiung, with the Four Objectives: to propagate Dharma through culture, to foster talents through education, to benefit society through philanthropy, and to purify human minds through spiritual cultivation. Fully

dedicated to the promotion of Humanistic Buddhism, he subsequently realized the grand vow of “May the Buddha’s Light shine universally; may the Dharma water flow across the Five Continents.”

56 years after the founding of Fo Guang Shan, he established over 300 temples across the globe such as Hsi Lai Temple in the United States, Nan Tien Temple in Australia, Nanhua Temple in South Africa, and Templo Zulai in Brazil, all of which are the largest Buddhist temples in their respective regions.



**Founder of five universities in Taiwan, the United States, Australia, and the Philippines**

In education, he founded the University of the West in the USA, Nanhua University and Fo Guang University in Taiwan, Nan Tien Institute in Australia, and Guang Ming College in the Philippines. He also founded 16 Buddhist Colleges, 27 art galleries, libraries, publishing houses, book stores, Water and Cloud Mobile Libraries, over 50 Chinese Schools, Chih-Kuang Vocational High School, Pu-Men Senior High School, Juntou Junior High School, Junyi Experimental High school, and several kindergartens.

In philanthropy, since 1970, he successively established children's homes, Fo Guang Senior Citizen's Homes, the Compassion Foundation, Jen-Ai Senior Home, Water and Cloud Mobile Hospitals, Fo Guang Clinic, Mentality Protection Center Vehicles, and supported the establishment of senior homes by the Kaohsiung County. He also sponsored Fo Guang Elementary and Junior High Schools, including dozens of Fo Guang Hospitals in mainland China, leading the Buddha's Light members worldwide in donating wheelchairs and mobile homes, providing emergency relief, and care as well as education for the young, the elderly, and the disadvantaged.



#### **Author of 395 Titles and Advocate of Cultural Dissemination**

In propagating Dharma through culture, he supervised the creation of the Fo Guang Buddhist Canon and Fo Guang Dictionary. In 1978, he founded the Fo Guang Publishing House, followed by the Fo Guang Shan Foundation for Culture and Education in 1988. Furthering his efforts, Gandha Samudra Co. and Buddha's Light Satellite Television (later renamed Beautiful Life Television) were founded in 1997. In 2000, he made history by launching the Merit Times Daily News, the first daily newspaper founded by the Buddhist community. As a lifelong prolific writer, he authored the Complete Works of Venerable Master Hsing Yun, totaling 395 volumes.

In 1992, the Buddha's Light International Association was inaugurated in Los Angeles, USA. Venerable Master was elected as the Honorary President of BLIA World Headquarters. Since its inception, the Association has expanded, with chapters established in over 170 countries worldwide, becoming the largest Chinese community organization globally. In 2003, BLIA achieved the milestone of being officially recognized as a member of the United Nations Non-Governmental Organization (NGO).

The Venerable Master, with a lifelong dedication to cultural education and the betterment of humanity, had earned numerous accolades and recognition. Since 1978, he had been bestowed with honorary doctoral degrees from esteemed universities globally, as well as the distinguished title of Honorary Professor.

In February 1998, the Venerable Master embarked on a journey to Bodhgaya, India, where he successfully revived the Bhikkhuni Ordination Lineage through the imparting of the Triple Platform Full Ordination. This marked a

significant milestone in Buddhist history, as the lineage had been lost for over a thousand years. The Venerable Master has also been a vocal advocate for the recognition of Buddha's Birthday as a national holiday, and in 1999, this was achieved with its official recognition by the Legislative Yuan.

In December 2011, the Fo Guang Buddha Memorial Center, under the visionary leadership of Venerable Master Hsing Yun, was completed and opened to the public. As a champion of interfaith harmony, the Venerable Master introduced the annual "When Buddha Meets the Gods Event," which saw the historic gathering of Buddha statues and deities from multiple religions, setting a new world record for the largest convergence of diverse religious representations in one location.



### **Bridging International and Cross-Strait Relations for the Benefit of the World**

Through out his life, the Venerable Master Hsing Yun formed relationships with numerous world leaders, including King Bhumibol the Great of Thailand, Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Vice-President Al Gore of the United States, several Prime Ministers of Malaysia, Mainland China Leaders Yang Shangkun, Jiang Zheming, Hu Jintao, and Xi Jinping, Prime Ministers of Singapore Lee Kuan Yew and Lee Hsien Loong, Prime Minister Tony Abbott of Australia, and leaders from various countries in Southeast Asia, as well as former Presidents of Taiwan including Chiang Ching-kuo, Chen Shui-bian, Ma Ying-jeou, and Tsai Ing-wen. In addition to political leaders, he also had the opportunity to engage with religious figures such as World Fellowship of Buddhists President H.S.H. Princess Poon Pismai Diskul, Pope John Paul II, and Pope Benedict XVI.

In a continued effort to advance cultural education and encourage cross-strait harmony toward world peace, Venerable Master Hsing Yun had undertaken significant endeavors in recent years. This included the restoration of his ancestral temple, Dajue Temple in Yixing, as well as the establishment of various cultural and educational facilities such as the Chinese Academy Museum, Yangzhou Jianzhen Library, Buddha Light Building at Nanjing University, Yangzhou Lecture Hall, Hsing Yun Cultural and Educational Foundation, and the reconstruction of Nanjing Tianlong Temple. These efforts reflected the Venerable Master's unwavering commitment to fostering a better world for all.

Venerable Master Hsing Yun's life was a shining example of the teachings of Buddha. Throughout his lifetime, he dedicated himself to serving countless individuals, providing guidance and hope to Buddhists everywhere. Despite his passing, his achievements have left an indelible impact on the world and will continue to inspire future generations. The legacy of Venerable Master Hsing Yun will live on and his unwavering commitment to propagating Humanistic Buddhism and delivering sentient beings will always be remembered. On behalf of the Buddhist community, we respectfully and sincerely offer our wishes for a swift and auspicious rebirth for Venerable Master Hsing Yun.

*Stars and clouds so vast they are infinite,  
Shining light on the five continents and the world;  
Today as you bid goodbye and reach the far shore,  
May your return to benefit the world be swift.*

