



My Way of Management

我的管理模式

Hear Me Out

貧僧有話要說系列

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Fo Guang Shan International Translation Center

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**NOT FOR SALE**

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Fo Guang Shan  
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## A Brief Biography of Venerable Master Hsing Yun

Venerable Master Hsing Yun was born in Jiangsu Province, China in 1927. He has studied at various renowned Buddhist institutions such as Qixia Vinaya College and Jiaoshan Buddhist College.

Master Hsing Yun arrived in Taiwan in 1949, and soon after became the chief editor of the publication, *Human Life*. In 1952, his efforts in establishing Buddhist Chanting Groups strengthened the foundation for his subsequent endeavors in the promotion of the Dharma. The Master founded Fo Guang Shan Monastery in 1967, with the primary goal of promoting Humanistic Buddhism through Buddhist education, culture, charity, and propagation of the Dharma. Since then, over two hundred branch temples have been established in major cities around the world. He

also set up art galleries, libraries, publishing houses, bookstores, mobile clinics, Buddhist colleges, and universities including University of the West, Fo Guang University, Nan Hua University, Nan Tien Institute, and Guang Ming College. Since 1970, Da Tzu Children's Home, Fo Guang Senior Home have been built to support and assist those in need of emergency relief and social services.

In 1977, the Fo Guang Tripitaka Editing Board was formed to compile the *Fo Guang Buddhist Canon* and *Fo Guang Dictionary of Buddhism*. Others including *Selected Chinese Buddhist Texts in Modern Language*, *Fo Guang Textbooks*, *Essential Guides to Buddhism*, *Pearls of Wisdom: Prayers for Engaged Living* have also been published.

Master Hsing Yun has 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. When he founded the Buddha's Light International Association in 1991 and was elected president of its world headquarters, he was closer to realizing the

ideal of having “the Buddha’s light shining throughout the three thousand realms, and the Dharma water flowing across the five continents.”





## Foreword to *Hear Me Out*

In March 2015, the Taipei City Government questioned Tzu Chi Foundation's disputed Neihu District project which had been turned down by four consecutive Mayors of Taipei. This controversy caused widespread public criticism and stirred up issues which drew in the entire Buddhist religion.

The truth is, Tzu Chi certainly has contributed positively to society, and their charitable and generous acts in relief aid and service over the past decades cannot be so easily denied. While Tzu Chi has gathered Buddhists and society in making charitable donations for social welfare projects, it is nevertheless no more than a social welfare organization, not a Buddhist order that is rooted in temples or monasteries.

Certainly, Tzu Chi must reflect on this matter. Other than a series of controversies, there is also the issue of Tzu Chi having kept donors and the public in the dark regarding its financial status. Since I, a humble monk, am also somewhat connected with Tzu Chi since I attended the groundbreaking ceremony of a Tzu Chi site fifty years ago, I feel obliged to speak up on behalf of innocent Buddhists whose faith and reputation have been jeopardized by public criticism.

In the beginning, I only set out to write one or two messages regarding the matter, but as the critique of Tzu Chi and even Buddhism itself continued to worsen, I therefore extended into the third, fourth, and then all the way to the twentieth message. I remember even when I was in Hainan, China, to attend the 2015 Boao Forum for Asia, I was still busy writing a foreword for the “Humble Monk” series that was being published for the *Merit Times*’ 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

Unexpectedly, these messages received an overwhelming response, from Buddhists and non-Buddhists worldwide. Throughout the seventy-seven years of my life as a monk, I have never been

so well-received by Buddhists, who requested that I keep writing. Feeling very touched by such enthusiasm, I therefore continued to narrate these articles, which were transcribed by Venerable Miao Kuang and members of my secretariat. As a result, forty messages from a humble monk have been completed to date.

These forty messages serve as an explanation. Sixty years ago, I settled in Yilan and began propagating Humanistic Buddhism by involving youths in music, singing, and dancing activities. In 1963, I then established a Buddhist College in Kaohsiung to recruit youths to study, practice, and devote themselves to Buddhism, in particular, to the propagation of Humanistic Buddhism. The college was later relocated to Fo Guang Shan, which, after fifty years, has managed to expand to all five continents of the world.

The Fo Guang Shan Order is not under the name of any individual but belongs to all Buddhists and devotees. As I narrate these stories on how Fo Guang Shan has established cultural, educational, and charitable undertakings for society without concealing any

facts, it is my hope to provide a report to the public and devotees, which should be deemed a good intention. At the same time, I would also like to provide a guideline to my disciples in their future spiritual endeavors. For example, I wish for them to develop the spirit of equality, to take matters into their own hands by saying that “the future of Buddhism is on my shoulders,” to regard illness as a companion, to be willing to relieve people from suffering and adversity, to cherish life, to care for the environment, and to value spiritual preservation.

For any religion, if you believe in it, then it is Buddha or God to you; if you do not, it is nothing but Mara or the Devil to you. Be it Buddha or Mara, God or Devil, it is all up to you to decide. I hereby humbly express my hope for society to be purified, for moral values to be enhanced, for society as a whole to be bettered, and for there to be peaceful exchanges between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait. I bear no further wishes in writing this book.

In the beginning, these articles were published in the *Merit Times* newspaper. As more and more requests to sponsor the publication of this as a book

continue to pour in, I hereby entrust the Venerable Master Hsing Yun Public Education Trust Fund, readers of the *Merit Times*, and all devotees to print and publicly distribute one million free copies of *Hear Me Out: Messages from a Humble Monk*. All you need to do is fill out a form, and without having to pay a cent, a complimentary copy of this book will be delivered to you by Fo Guang Shan.

Other than the forty messages, some appendices have also been collected in this book, along with selected responses from my readers. To establish a correct view and understanding in Buddhism among the world of humanity is my greatest hope of all.

In hearing the disciple who is responsible for producing this book explain that the cost for each copy is about NTD\$500, my reply was that money is not the issue: what matters is what we are offering to them—namely, our honesty and sincerity. I therefore would like to offer this book as a gift to all readers, that you may all be blessed with safety and peace:

May kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity pervade the Dharma realms;

May all people and heavenly beings  
benefit from our blessings and  
friendship;

May our ethical practice of Chan,  
Pure Land, and the Precepts help  
us to realize equality and patience;

May we undertake the Great Vows with  
humility and gratitude.

*Hsing yun*

May 16th, 2015

Fo Guang Shan Monastery,  
Founding Master's Quarters



## My Way of Management

*My humble way of management can be seen in the etiquette of the Main Shrine, in the organizational system of the Meditation Hall, in resolutely serving others in the kitchen, and in the harmony of interpersonal relationships.*





My father was the sole heir of the family. Twenty-eight days after he was born, my grandfather passed away. When my father was a little more than ten years old, my widowed grandmother also passed away, leaving him orphaned. My life as a monastic is the same as being a sole heir. While I have numerous fellow monastics in the same monastery and of the same sect, my Master and Dharma brothers all passed away very early, and I was even more “orphaned” when I arrived in Taiwan.

### **A Common Goal: To Be of Service to All**

I am thankful for the opportunities created through causes and conditions. Since Fo Guang Shan’s founding, there are now 1,300 monastic disciples in the order, as well as over a hundred *Jiaoshi*.<sup>1</sup> In Taiwan, the temples are quite small. Having this large monastery all of a sudden, many people began to ask how I am able to manage it all. I have never learned

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1. Male lay-disciples of the sangha, who also maintain a celibate life..

management, nor do I understand it; I feel that as long as everyone is equally enthusiastic about Buddhism and society, serving the public, emphasizing cause and effect, and transparency, then justice, fairness, communality, and harmony will naturally occur.

One of my monastic disciples is a graduate of the University of Hong Kong in management studies. Starting forty to fifty years ago, management became a popular subject among people. There is personnel management, monetary management, school management, library management, hospital management, and factory management, among others. When I saw that this disciple was conceited and arrogant about being highly educated, I told him, “When managing wealth, money does not speak and can be used as you wish. As for managing material objects, they are inanimate and move at your every will. Managing people, on the other hand, is more difficult, but it is still not as difficult as managing one’s own mind. Are you able to manage your mind?”

In my childhood, I did not receive any education. I had never even seen a school building either.



Once, I was invited to National Taiwan University to give a talk about management. Of course, I dared not accept the invitation. Although Buddhism also has its set of management studies such as the two orders of the community, the forty eight positions in the monastery, the Chan monastery pure rules, and the precepts themselves, I have never deeply studied them, so how could I dare to talk to others about management?

Later in 1980, former Minister of Education, Chang Chi-yun, who had founded Chinese Culture



**Incense Boards — A Symbol of a Chan Monastery's Pure Rules.**

University in Yangmingshan, asked me to be the Dean of the Indian Culture Research Institute. In his speech, he said, “This entire place is just as a monastery. Let us welcome the return of our abbot, Venerable Master Hsing Yun.” When I heard this, I felt deep shame within my heart; although I have founded Fo Guang Shan, I dared not appoint myself as abbot. Because an abbot has to be well-versed with the forty-eight positions in a monastery as well as the pure rules and regulations, I feel that I am still not qualified enough.



**Fo Guang Shan Meditation Hall.**



## **Sharing Joys and Sorrows: A Fair Mind is a Carefree Mind**

A couple of years ago, Vice President Tang Ming-che of National Taiwan University requested a visit with me. I have never had any contact with him, but have always been unwilling to decline others' requests. Upon arriving, he asked, "I have a very odd feeling about you all. We, as laymen, have two days off in a work week as well as annual vacation leave, but we still want more holidays and a higher salary. We, as laypeople, have salaries of tens of thousands of New Taiwan dollars each month, but we still feel that it is not enough and desire a raise. I hear that you have over a thousand monastics who work without holidays or salaries. In the evening, they work additional hours well past midnight. Where does this type of motivation come from?"

I have never had people ask me this type of question before, and as I heard him ask, I suddenly felt that it was indeed a good question. I answered that laypeople live a life of "having," such as having

vacations, having salaries, having properties, having families, and having children. Having is limited, finite, and exhaustible. So, of course, one will always complain that it is not enough. We as monastics live a life of “not having,” such as not having holidays and salaries, and we only work with a perfect willingness to serve society without the desire or expectation of anything in return. “Not having” is unlimited, infinite, and inexhaustible. Being a renowned professor at National Taiwan University, I do not know how he felt about my answer.

Speaking of management at Fo Guang Shan, I feel that as long as everyone, whether senior or junior, is able to share joys and hardships together with an equanimous heart, how can one not feel carefree? Of course, I also frequently tell my disciples “to not be calculative or compare” and not to have interpersonal quarrels so that you can pass your days in peace. In hopes of encouraging practitioners on the path, I have written the “Song of the Ten Practices and Cultivations,” which has gradually become a song for all to sing.



*Practice One: Don't be calculative.*

*Practice Two: Don't compare.*

*Practice Three: Be polite.*

*Practice Four: Always smile.*

*Practice Five: Don't worry about being  
disadvantaged.*

*Practice Six: Be honest and kind.*

*Practice Seven: Be carefree.*

*Practice Eight: Speak good words.*

*Practice Nine: Befriend honorable people.*

*Practice Ten: Everyone, become a Buddha.*

*If everyone tries these ten practices,*

*We shall live in the Buddha's Pure Land of  
joy and carefreeness.*

I have also advocated the “Philosophy of Being Second”; as the saying goes, “Trouble is caused by excess speech, afflictions arises from trying to be more than who you really are.” This can be seen by looking at the high death rate of the eldest princes from each dynasty, such as Sui dynasty’s Prince

Yang Yong and Tang dynasty's Li Jiancheng. All of them had wanted to emerge on top and thus became jealous and risked their own lives. If everyone is able to be content with "being second" and knows how to be selfless, then we can conduct ourselves and handle situations without qualms.

I also feel that Buddhism teaches us to be resolved and to be patient, both of which are very useful. With resolve, we have strength and are perfectly willing. Resolve to serve Buddhism, to liberate sentient beings, to work for the monastery, to be at a disadvantage, and to be patient. If we have resolve, why be calculative regarding gain and loss?

Patience is still very important, and is not only for monastics. As everyone in this world wishes to survive and make a livelihood, patience is therefore essential. With patience, we become aware of our interpersonal relationships and the importance of emotional stability. What others say in different situations and interactions all require our understanding, acceptance, and responsibility, as well as support,



solution, and reconciliation. All of these require the wisdom and strength of patience.

Therefore, I have written a Dharma Verse on Renunciation as a way of reminding disciples who seek to renounce how to be a monastic and what my views are towards renunciation. This Dharma Verse on Renunciation is not only to be chanted, but to be pondered carefully. It is something that should be practiced, actualized, and regarded as a motto for all disciples of Fo Guang Shan:

*Up at Fo Guang Shan, a jubilant atmosphere fills the air;*

*Since inauguration, it has reached out to people of all places.*

*Good causes and good conditions have led to many good outcomes,*

*The youths are glorifying Buddhism by becoming a part of this faith.*

*The aspiration to become renounced is most auspicious,*

*Though one bids family and loved ones  
goodbye and leaves home,  
The eight groups of heavenly beings praise  
in a unanimous voice,  
For the wisdom which one pursues holds a  
life that shall last for eternity.  
Head shaven and donning the monastic  
robe, one appears truly majestic,  
Always be mindful of the practice of pa-  
tience and discipline.  
Constantly remember the duty of Dharma  
propagation at all times,  
Prevent one's initial aspirations from being  
dominated by hesitation and doubt.  
One must remain consistent in the conducts  
and ways of a monastic,  
Never throw a fit of moodiness or fall into a  
state of disheartenment.  
Be diligent in doing chores all for the ser-  
vice of the Order,  
Wondrous fragrances will arise from a  
respectful and humble mind.*



*Fortify the mind with the tastes of bland tea  
and coarse food,  
Does it matter if there are only ragged  
clothes for an outfit?  
One needs not pursue a life of physical  
enjoyment,  
Truth can only be perceived upon transcen-  
dence of materialism.  
Bear in mind the law of cause and effect,  
also good and bad,  
Let grudges and gossip be forgotten readily.  
Study the teachings in depth and be aware  
of faults and merits,  
Loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and  
equanimity will help you thrive.  
Never be absent from morning and evening  
chanting practices,  
Chant the sutras, prostrate to Buddha, and  
revere the King of Dharma.  
If one lacks wealth or affinities, just let it be,  
All one can depend on is the Dharma to be  
ferried across to the other shore.*

*Avoid wandering to places within the first  
ten years,  
Settle your body and mind in deliberate  
contemplations.  
It matters not if the world or other monas-  
teries are better,  
Boundless joy can be realized in one's  
abode, here and now.*

**Diligent Cultivation:  
Being Happy and Without Regret**

In this Dharma verse, I have not altered the spirit of traditional monastic practice. It has always been that a monastic should adhere to a monastery and practice the Way at ease.

At Fo Guang Shan, only in the recent decade was the waking time adjusted to 5:30am in order to adapt to changing social norms. In the past, the entire monastery lived according to the following timetable:



|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| 4:30am        | Wake up                                  |
| 5:00am        | Morning chanting                         |
| 6:00am        | Breakfast                                |
| 1:30 - 3:30pm | Class                                    |
| 3:30 - 4:30pm | Chore work                               |
| 4:30pm        | Shower time                              |
| 6:00pm        | Dinner                                   |
| 7:00pm        | Self-study                               |
| 9:00pm        | Evening chanting                         |
| 10:00pm       | Bed time (Sounding of the Drum and Bell) |

On Saturdays and Sundays, there are visitors who come and go. In addition to classes, staff also take turns receiving guests, guiding tours, as well as cooking three meals and serving food.

Instructors sometimes only have time to teach on Saturdays and Sundays. Frequently, it is a whole day of intensive classes, sometimes even including the self-study period in the evening. In addition to theory, cultivation practices are included, such as transcribing sutras, sitting meditation, pilgrimage,

and chanting the Buddha's name throughout the entire day.

Although there are outsiders who criticize us, I frequently have the urge to ask them in return, "Can you sit in a classroom and attend a class for six to eight hours? Are you able to take three formal monastic meals that only have rice and vegetables every day for many years? The Offering Mantra and the Dedication of Merit are chanted before and after the meals, making it about an hour of mealtime; are you able to do this? Are you able to wake up at 4:30am every morning and rest at 10:00pm when the evening



The Constitutions and Articles of Fo Guang Shan.



*How to Be a Fo Guang Buddhist*



bell is rung? Are you able to attend morning and evening chanting daily as well as follow the monastery bell and board signals?" The humble monastics at Fo Guang Shan work every day for the sake of Buddhism and to serve others. Even though everyone is busy, they are joyful being busy with purpose and with smiles across their faces, passing every day as if celebrating the New Year.

### **Collective Effort: Lead by Organization**

If I were to be called a humble monk, then my thousand disciples in Fo Guang Shan should also be called humble monastics. If you were to ask them whether or not they have money, they would probably say no. But if you were to ask them whether or not they are happy, they would definitely tell you that they are very happy and content. Otherwise, why would they renounce lay life to become humble monastics?

Furthermore, in order to establish Fo Guang Shan's religious practices and ideology, as well as

the guiding disciplinary principles to protect the monastery, I established the Twelve Guidelines for Fo Guang Shan Monastics, which are as follows:

*Do not miss shaving the head at the appropriate time.*

*Do not stay overnight in the house of a layperson.*

*Do not lend or borrow money from each other.*

*Do not corrupt the monastic order.*

*Do not accept your own disciples.*

*Do not accumulate money for yourself.*

*Do not establish your own temples.*

*Do not keep your own devotees.*

*Do not accept donations for yourself.*

*Do not solicit donations for yourself.*

*Do not deal in personal property.*

*Do not make your own food or drink alone.*

In Buddhism, it is easy to talk about regulations, but much harder to put them into practice. Fo Guang



Shan does not belong to any particular person. It is a religious order; therefore one cannot only seek personal peace and happiness. All actions must take into consideration the interests of the entire order and assembly, as well as establish the concept of “the greater self.” Those in the monastery all abide by a common set of regulations, an organizational system, faith, adherence, and freedom as a standard of conduct. This is precisely like the saying, “Work with collective effort, and lead with a system. Do only what is in accord with the Buddha, and rely on nothing but the Dharma.”

Later, the number of disciples and devotees who followed this humble monk gradually increased. Knowing that teachers and the students at National Taiwan University call themselves “NTU Members” and Chinese Culture University’s staff and students call themselves “Hwa Kang Members,” I propose that all those who have affinities with Fo Guang Shan can all call themselves “Fo Guang (Buddha’s Light) Members.” In order to establish a common understanding for everyone, I have successively delivered

eighteen talks on “How to Be a Fo Guang Buddhist” to allow monastics and devotees to have a deeper understanding of Fo Guang Shan’s objectives, goals, practices, and regulations. The content of these eighteen talks can be found in *The Humanistic Buddhism Series: Fo Guang and its Religious Order*.<sup>2</sup>

### **Sheltered by Buddha’s Light: Success Goes to the Assembly**

I also tell my disciples to always maintain the conduct and spirit of “Honor goes to the Buddha; success goes to the assembly; benefit goes to the monastery; merit goes to the benefactors.”

“Honor goes to the Buddha” means that although Fo Guang Shan has many people working collectively, one cannot dispute over personal contributions to achievements or be attached to them. Instead, one needs to be able to delight at the deeds of others and comply with the assembly as all honor is the result of teamwork and the glory of the Buddha.

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<sup>2</sup> Not yet published in English.



“Success goes to the assembly” means, that as Fo Guang Shan’s undertakings in propagating the Dharma would not be possible through just the sole efforts of any individual, success belongs to everyone.

“Benefit goes to the monastery” means that everything in Fo Guang Shan is conducted in accordance to the six points of reverent harmony of the sangha as established by the Buddha. The six points refer to harmony in view through sharing the same understanding, moral harmony through sharing the same precepts, economic harmony through sharing things equally, mental harmony through shared happiness, verbal harmony through avoiding disputes, and physical harmony through living together. In Fo Guang Shan, although the individual is not wealthy, one does not need to worry about one’s livelihood in ways such as acquiring clothing, food, shelter, or practice. From sickness to studying abroad, everything is cared for by the monastery. As there are no private savings or possessions, it is like living in a Buddha Land that is carefree and without worries.

“Merit goes to the benefactors” means that devotees who serve, cultivate, contribute, and give their support should always have part of any affinities and merits.

All in all, I am a humble monk. Apart from money, the many philosophies, concepts, organizational systems—even the three acts of goodness, the four givings, the five harmonies, and the six perfections—are all part of my wealth of Dharma. How does this humble monk manage? To be honest, my humble way of management can be seen in the etiquette of the Main Shrine, in the organizational system of the Meditation Hall, in resolutely serving others in the kitchen, in the physical labor of chore work, in the harmony of interpersonal relationships, and in the enlightenment of the righteous faith in the Dharma. I hope that Fo Guang Shan is suitably poor, so that people may lead simple lives. This is what is meant by taking the Middle Path when it comes to management. Apart from this, what other management skills does this humble monk have? As the saying goes, “Where there is the Dharma, there is a



way.” With the Dharma, there is no need to blame the heavens or to accuse others, nor is there a need for self-pity.

In this world, money does not determine poverty or wealth as these are states of mind. I have discussed the usage of the words, “Humble Monk,” which has been prevalent in the monasteries of Mainland China since the ancient times. Humble, but not impoverished, as it naturally should be.

Fo Guang Shan  
International Translation Center

# Fo Guang Shan Branch Temples

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### **IBPS South Bay**

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Email: [Fremont@ibps.org](mailto:Fremont@ibps.org)

### **American Buddhist Cultural Society (San Bao Temple)**

1750 Van Ness Avenue. San Francisco, CA 94109

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Website: [www.sanbaotemple.org](http://www.sanbaotemple.org)

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### **Light of Buddha Temple Inc.**

632 Oak Street. Oakland, CA 94607

Tel: (510)835-0791

**Fo Guang Shan Bodhi Temple**

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Email: sacramento@ibps.org

**Denver Buddhist Cultural Society**

2530 W. Alameda Avenue. Denver, CO 80219

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222 Queens St. Honolulu, HI 96813

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