Trà Vinh, January 3, 2025

Dear Venerable Monks and Nuns of the Dharma Realm Buddhist Association and all Good and Wise Teachers,

I live in the countryside of Vĩnh Long province, Vietnam. From a young age, I would go to the temple with my Mother on full moon days or during the Tết holidays; thus, I formed a wholesome affinity with the Triple Jewel. After getting married, I faced problems in my marriage and daily life, I didn't know how to handle them. I was fortunate to encounter the Cundi Mantra, and then the Great Compassion Mantra, followed by the Śūraṅgama Mantra. After reciting the Śūraṅgama Mantra for the first time, a sudden thought came to me, "Oh no, I need to be a vegetarian." So, the next day, I immediately became a vegetarian. After some time reciting the Śūraṅgama Mantra, I find it difficult to fully understand its meaning. I searched online and found Venerable Master Hua's explanation of the Śūraṅgama Mantra. This was a turning point in my life.

Before reading the explanations of the Śūraṅgama Mantra, I thought I should learn about the Venerable Master Hua's life to ensure I am following a genuine Good and Wise Teacher. I read that he practiced filial piety for three years in a small hut beside his Mother's grave after she passed away. Oh, how truly great was his spirit of filial piety! The more I read about his life, the more moved I felt. His teachings are so profound and wonderful. I vow to spread his teachings to help people find happiness and escape suffering. I vow to promote the Śūraṅgama Sūtra and Mantra. I feel joyful for anyone who brings forth a mind to read and uphold the Śūraṅgama Dharma, the most wondrous Dharma among all the Dharmas. I consider the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas my second home, and I vow to protect the Right Dharma.

I have long nurtured a strong wish to visit the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas. Serendipitously a good opportunity came when I learned about an upcoming Precepts for the Deceased Ceremony in Taiwan with Dharma Master Sure as the Preceptor. I was so happy and hoped to attend to also receive the Three Refuges and Five Precepts. During the visa application process, I faced many obstacles and worried that I wouldn't be able to go. But, miraculously, everything went smoothly. When I receive the visa, I was overjoyed. Although I hadn't yet boarded the plane, I was filled with a mixture of inexpressible emotions, excitement, anticipation, worry, joy... Taking refuge with the Sangha of the Dharma Realm Buddhist Association and having Dharma Master Sure transmit the Precepts was my long-held wish. When Dharma Master Yun handed me the Refuge and Precept certificates, that very moment was so sacred and indescribable. Returning home, the boundless joy and happiness were still present in my mind. I am deeply grateful to Dharma Master Yun, the Sangha of the Dharma Realm Buddhist Association and all the volunteers, including Ms. Karen and Ms. Tam, for their kindness. I am truly thankful for all the help and care that we received throughout our trip.

There were many unforgettable memories during the ceremony. The words of Dharma Master Sure were like personal teachings to me even though he spoke to the Assembly as a whole. When he explained the Five Precepts and mentioned that having been married, one still looks at the opposite gender or lying in daily life, I felt ashamed, deeply ashamed. Dharma Master Sure also emphasized the importance of bowing and encouraged us to bow 10,000 prostrations to the Buddha or bow the Ten Thousand Buddhas Jeweled Repentance. Lastly, he advised me to read the Earth Store Sūtra or the Medicine Master Buddha Sūtra to dedicate merit to my ill Father. He also said that my Father should continue taking medicine. His advice is very precious to me, I treasure his teachings and will try to practice according to them. I will also follow the Six Great Principles that the Venerable Master taught: no fighting, no greed, no seeking, no selfishness, no pursuit of personal advantage, and no lying. I wish that the Buddha Dharma would flourish worldwide and that the Right Dharma would always remain in the world.

Bow in Respect
Disciple Trần Thân Phong

English translation by Huỳnh Ngọc Tâm & Đỗ Hoàng Yến