Organizing the Postscript

Mingzhen

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My late grandfather's collected writings on Buddhism have finally been published. Six years have passed since the project began, from gathering and organizing the manuscripts to editing and printing them. Although the title calls these the complete works, the collection still falls far short of being truly complete. Yet, judging from the surviving manuscripts that can now be gathered, it is relatively comprehensive. This has at last fulfilled a long-cherished wish of mine.

Several years ago, Zhao Puchu, then president of the Buddhist Association of China, spoke with me about my late grandfather. When he saw the Records of Lectures by Lay Practitioner Wang Xianglu that I had preserved, he said, "This book should be published; it would be of great help to practitioners." Elder Zhao was delighted when he saw the manuscripts for the collected works, repeatedly saying, "Excellent! Excellent!" He also wrote the title of this book in his own calligraphy.

My wish to publish my grandfather's collected works stems from his stature as an accomplished practitioner and a Buddhist scholar who grasped the essence of the Buddhadharma, rather than from our family relationship. Whether from the perspective of practice or of scholarship, the publication of his writings will benefit society. I have already given a brief account of my grandfather's life and his experience of practicing and transmitting the Dharma in A Brief Biography of Lay Practitioner Wang Xianglu. Here, I will focus only on the distinctive features of the Heart-of-Heart Dharma and the main points involved in compiling these writings.

The Heart-of-Heart Dharma was transmitted in the 1920s by Dharma Master Dayu, an eminent monk of Donglin Monastery on Mount Lu.

This Dharma emerged in the wake of world war, when the people suffered hardship and upheaval, conditions for practice were extremely poor, and many did not understand the essentials of cultivation. Distinct from Chan and Pure Land practice, it integrates Chan, Pure Land, and Esoteric Buddhism; it opens the way to prajñā, makes the benefits of the Dharma fully available, and hastens attainment. At its

heart, the practice aims at Mind-Seal and the genuine benefit that comes with realization.

Its distinctive feature is that one first cultivates until realizing the mind and seeing one's true nature, and then, after awakening, engages in proper cultivation to eliminate habitual tendencies. Many people need only practice in accordance with the Dharma for two or three years to awaken. It offers a more direct path of practice. As a great Dharma specially transmitted in the particular circumstances of modern times, it has special significance for benefiting the world and liberating beings.

Having been influenced by my late grandfather from childhood, I developed an interest in Buddhist studies as I grew older. I sought teachings far and wide, studied under many masters, and received empowerment and Dharma transmission from several acharyas. I later led the editing of The Great Compendium of Chinese Esoteric Buddhism. It was through practicing this Dharma myself that I came to appreciate its significance more deeply. I therefore resolved to publish this book.

In the little over sixty years since the 1920s, this Dharma has spread widely in China and abroad. Countless students have taken up the practice, and innumerable practitioners have attained its fruits. Apart from an early poem, "Song of Liberation," and a farewell poem written before his retirement into seclusion, no other writings by Dharma Master Dayu survive. The essential teachings of Mind-Seal are preserved entirely in my grandfather's writings.

My grandfather founded the Buddhist Studies Society, later renamed Mind-Seal Vihara. Over several decades, he wrote no fewer than several million Chinese characters, but regrettably almost all of the manuscripts he kept were destroyed. Everything included in this book was preserved by his disciples. Fortunately, the main portions survive intact, especially the instructions for practice, which are invaluable to later students. Unlike ordinary commentaries on Buddhist scriptures, this book does not chiefly emphasize the study of doctrine and language. Yet, to support and guide practice, it explains basic teachings in plain language, helping practitioners recognize their potential, strengthen their faith, and begin on a sound footing.

The collected works are arranged in three main parts by publication date and subject matter: (1) comprehensive expositions and elucidations of hidden meanings in several Buddhist scriptures; (2) important lectures by Lay Practitioner Wang Xianglu; and (3) miscellaneous reflections and other writings composed by the lay practitioner in his later years.

Over the years, my father, Wang Kexiang, and I traveled several times to Tianjin, Shanghai, Hangzhou, and other places to collect my grandfather's writings. We

received assistance from several of my seniors in the Dharma lineage, including Cao Chongfang, Pan Jiarui, Wang Bianzhang, Xu Hengzhi, and Zhu Yizuo. Especially noteworthy was my teacher, Master Yuanyin (whose secular name was Li Zhongding), my grandfather's Dharma heir. After my grandfather's death, he endured every hardship in his efforts to spread this great Dharma and remained steadfast in this work for decades.

Publication also owed much to his personally enlisting his disciples to collect my grandfather's writings from many places. His disciples in Hangzhou gave particular help in organizing the material. Without all this arduous work, the compilation and publication of this book would have been impossible.

Several years ago, during a visit to Singapore, dozens of friends there—including Dharma Master Shi Mingyi; Mr. and Mrs. Xie Guanghui; Mr. and Mrs. Shi Yiban; Mr. and Mrs. Chen Liangou; Dr. Hong Mengzhu; Ms. Lai Yuzhu; Mr. Yu'an, editor-in-chief of the Abridged Tripiṭaka; and Mr. Jingding, deputy editor-in-chief of the Complete Collection of Chinese Lamp Records—offered sponsorship and support for the publication of this book.

I would also like especially to thank Xiangfu Chan Monastery in Wuxi for endorsing and initiating the printing of the Collected Works of Lay Practitioner Wang Xianglu, my late grandfather, as well as the Jinling Scriptural Press for supporting the project and undertaking the printing. As those who sponsored the printing have said, the reprinting and circulation of this book will be of great benefit in guiding later students, propagating the Buddhadharma, awakening wisdom, and purifying people's minds.

As the Collected Works go to press, I offer my heartfelt thanks to all the people and organizations named above. May this merit and virtue extend to all, and may I and all sentient beings attain Buddhahood together.