

A Letter to Dharma Protectors and Friends 2025

Dear Dharma protectors and friends,
Auspicious blessings!

“As spring returns to the earth, joy fills every home; as blessings descend upon humanity, happiness fills every hall.” At the start of 2025, the Year of the Snake, on behalf of the Fo Guang Shan global monastic community, I, Hsin Bau, extend Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s New Year blessings: “Keep Going, the Future is Bright.” May you have the courage to step forward, make diligent efforts, and find brightness ahead.

Over the past year, Fo Guang Shan experienced many significant moments. Notably, on the first anniversary of the passing of our beloved master, Venerable Master Hsing Yun, people from all walks of life, benefactors, and Buddha’s Light members gathered at Fo Guang Shan for the “Memorial Service for the First Anniversary of Fo Guang Shan Founding Master—Ven. Master Hsing Yun’s Passing Away,” the panel discussion “Commemorative Forum for the First Anniversary of Fo Guang Shan Founding Master—Ven. Master Hsing Yun’s Passing Away, and *Star and Cloud: The Musical* at the Great Enlightenment Hall of the Buddha Museum. On the same day, Fo Guang Shan temples worldwide held simultaneous commemorations, collectively cherishing the Venerable Master’s compassion and wisdom.

The Fo Guang Shan Board of Directors, adhering to the Buddha’s teachings and the democratic system established by the Venerable Master, elected the 11th Board Members. Most Venerable Hsin Ting announced the results, with Most Venerable Hsin Bau, and Venerables Hui Chuan, Miao Shi, Ru Chang, Hui Rang, Chueh Pei, Hui Chi, Hui Kuan, Hui Ping, Miao Guang, and Chueh Rong serving as council members, and five alternates including Venerables Miao Nan, Man Chien, Miao Kuang, Chueh Chu, and Chueh Nian. I, Hsin Bau, was then reappointed by the newly elected members, as the Head Abbot and Chairperson of the 11th Board of Directors. Upholding the Venerable Master’s teachings and mission, we must persevere with steady steps and carry forward the spirit of Humanistic Buddhism—Buddhism that is taught by the Buddha, needed by humanity, purifies the mind, and manifests goodness and beauty—bringing more light and hope to the world.

Looking back on the year, the interconnectedness between Fo Guang Shan and global society has been evident through cultural and artistic preservation, the advancement of Buddhist education, the extension of charitable endeavors, and cross-strait and international exchanges. Everywhere, the seeds sown by the Venerable Master have sprouted, flourished, and borne fruit, offering abundant spiritual nourishment to the world.

In January, the Fo Guang Shan Culture Council hosted the “Passing the Light: A Symposium on Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s Cultural Legacy,” as well as inaugurating the Taipei office, located at the 5th floor of the Taipei Vihara. During the symposium, 47 Fo Guang Shan Cultural Awards were presented, emphasizing the continuation and commitment to cultural preservation. To commemorate Venerable Master Hsing Yun and celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Fo Guang Shan Taipei Vihara, a year-long exhibition titled “Wisdom and Light: A Life in One-Stroke Calligraphy—The Photographic Journey of Venerable Master Hsing Yun” was launched, offering insights into the Venerable Master’s Dharma propagation journey.

In February, Inauguration Ceremony of

the Venerable Master Hsing Yun Center for Buddhism and the Arts at Guang Ming College Cebu, the Philippines, officially opened, establishing a significant venue for academic exchange and research. The ancestral temple of Fo Guang Shan, Dajue Temple in Yixing, hosted its inaugural “Guanyin Cultural Festival,” featuring activities themed around “Seeking, Paying Homage to, and Hearing Guanyin.” In April, the Fo Guang Yuan Art Gallery Headquarters collaborated with Jiuqutang Station in Dashu District, Kaohsiung, to create vibrant murals in the station’s pedestrian underpass, showcasing localized Buddhist art.

In August, the Fo Guang Shan Institute of Humanistic Buddhism released new volumes in the *Oral History Series of Fo Guang Shan Elders*, featuring interviews with Venerable Tzu Hui and Venerable Tzu Jung. The Fo Guang Yuan Art Gallery celebrated its 30th anniversary with a special exhibition of artworks gifted to Venerable Master Hsing Yun and Fo Guang Shan by various artists as a tribute to the Venerable Master. Additionally, in September, the Headquarters held the “Art without Borders 1994–2024: Celebrating the 30th Anniversary of Fo Guang Yuan Art Gallery Academic Conference,” attended by over 250 experts from museums and academia.

The Buddha’s Light International Association (BLIA) held its 2024 Board of Directors Meeting at Hosujji Temple, Japan, drawing over 2,000 attendees. During the event, BLIA established the Ho Chi Minh Chapter in Vietnam and the Tokyo Fo Guang Scout Troop in Japan. Concurrently, the 6th “Three Acts of Goodness Microfilm Awards Ceremony” saw participation from 115 countries with 3,013 entries. That same month, the “Finals of the BLIA Cup Choir Competition” took place at the Encore Melaka Theatre in Malaysia, attended by over 1,000 participants. Through arts, music, and modern media, Humanistic Buddhism continues to reach wider audiences.

The Chunghua Association of Ancient and Modern Humanities has now translated *365 Days for Travelers: Wisdom from Chinese Literary and Buddhist Classics*, edited by Venerable Master Hsing Yun, into 17 languages, with nearly 2 million copies distributed worldwide. The Humanistic Buddhist Reading Club held 26 reading symposiums across Taiwan, with the National Reading Expo hosted at Nanhua and Fo Guang Universities, attracting nearly 4,000 participants. These initiatives promote *The Complete Works of Venerable Master Hsing Yun* and the concept of integrating books into daily life.

To enhance the efficiency and quality of Buddhist text translations such as the *Fo Guang Buddhist Canon* and *The Complete Works of Venerable Master Hsing Yun*, the Fo Guang Shan Institute of Humanistic Buddhism signed a memorandum of understanding with the Berkeley Artificial Intelligence Research (BAIR) laboratory and the MITRA project at the University of California, Berkeley. This collaboration employs artificial intelligence to advance Buddhist literary translation. The institute also launched the “*Fo Guang Dictionary of Buddhism* Digital BETA Version,” making 5,000 translated entries available for testing, signaling the arrival of a new era of technology-aided Dharma propagation tailored to contemporary needs.

After nearly four years of collective effort, the *Fo Guang Buddhist Canon: Liturgy Canon—Monastic Rules*, comprising 20 volumes, was finalized and set for publication.

In June, Nanjing’s Jinling Scriptural Press sent the ancestral temple, Dajue Temple in Yixing, a carved block of Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s “An Honest Revelation: My Last Words,” a historic collaboration completed by four generations of engraving artisans.

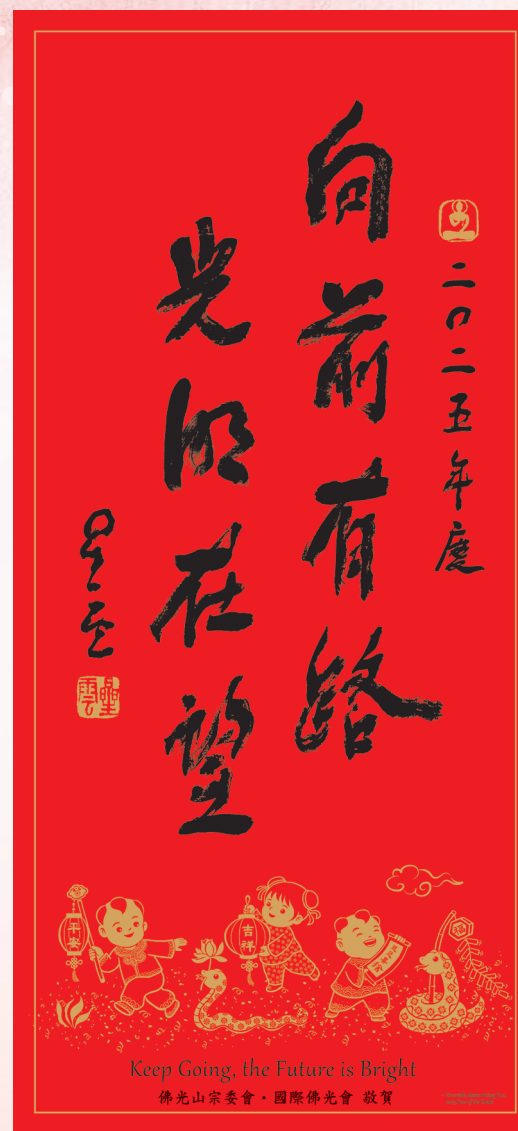
The Buddha Museum’s exhibition “Silk Road Splendor—Dunhuang Caves Art Exhibition” was recognized at the 21st Annual National Museum Top Ten Exhibition Awards in Mainland China, receiving the International Exhibition and Cross-Strait Cooperation Award. To commemorate the first anniversary of Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s passing, the “Star and Cloud: Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s One-Stroke Calligraphy Exhibition” was held from November to December at the National Museum of China in Beijing and the China Art Museum in Shanghai. This marked the third time the Venerable Master’s calligraphy was exhibited at the National Museum, providing an opportunity for people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait to honor his contributions to peace and cultural exchange.

In early December, the “A World in a Seed: Yungang Grottoes” Art Exhibition was unveiled at the Buddha Museum, showcasing the art of China’s four great grottoes. This exhibition is a testament to the Venerable Master’s efforts in fostering cross-strait cultural exchanges. On December 25th, the “When Buddha Meets the Gods Event” at the Buddha Museum broke the World Record for the third time by hosting the largest assembly of temples, Buddhist statues, and deities in one location, demonstrating a harmonious fusion of culture and religion.

In September, “The Arts of the *Lotus Sutra*” exhibition from the National Palace Museum in Taipei was relocated to the Buddha Museum. In October, Fo Guang Shan and the Dunhuang Research Academy signed a collaboration agreement, initiating a new chapter in Dunhuang cultural exchange. This was followed by a memorandum of understanding signed in late November between Fo Guang Shan and the Beijing Palace Museum. These collaborations hold great significance in promoting traditional Chinese culture and cross-strait exchange, aiming to bring rare artistic experiences to the public.

The Buddha Museum has long promoted energy-saving initiatives and achieved the “Environmental Education Facility Certification” last year, and a memorandum of cooperation with the Ministry of Transportation and Communications Tourism Administration was signed to promote green tourism, cultural tourism, and sustainable development. The Pure Green Foundation and the General Chamber of Commerce jointly launched the “Green Guardian Action Plan” press conference, where over 20 major enterprises jointly initiated forest restoration actions to contribute to environmental sustainability.

This year marks the 60th anniversary of Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s establishment of sangha education. Over the past six decades, thousands of exceptional teachers have nurtured more than 6,000 Buddhist disciples from 32 countries and regions. To commemorate this milestone, the Fo Guang Shan Tsung Lin University organized events such as a memorial concert for Venerable Master Hsing Yun, interviews with distinguished alumni, academic conferences on sangha education, and the “Handing Down the Light: Commemorative Exhibition.” Following the Venerable Master’s establishment of 16 Buddhist academies, the Indonesian Buddhist College was founded last year. Under the Venerable Master’s spiritual



guidance, these numerous students have grown and thrived, spreading the seeds of Humanistic Buddhism throughout the world.

The achievements of Fo Guang Shan’s social education efforts have been widely recognized, particularly at Nanhua University and Fo Guang University, which have maintained their outstanding educational standards. Both universities passed the Ministry of Education’s institutional evaluation last year, excelling in four key indicators: institutional governance and management, faculty teaching and academic professionalism, student learning outcomes, and social responsibility and sustainable development. They received the highest honor of a six-year accreditation period.

In May, President Lin Tsong-ming of Nanhua University retired upon reaching the mandatory retirement age, and Vice President Kao Chun-hsiung succeeded him. After his honorable retirement, President Lin assumed the position of Deputy President of the Fo Guang Shan University Consortium, continuing his dedication to education. In November, Josh Han-Chieh Chao was inaugurated as the 8th President of Fo Guang University. We extend our gratitude to all past presidents and faculty within the Fo Guang educational system. Under the leadership of these presidents, we believe that a new chapter will unfold.

Fo Guang Shan Pu Men High School achieved a 100% acceptance rate through the “Stars Recommendation Program” for university admissions, with students gaining acceptance to National Taiwan University and National Tsing Hua University. Ten students from the Culinary Management Department obtained Level B certification in Chinese cuisine, earning eleven professional licenses. The school received Honorary Mention awards at the National Science Exhibition for three consecutive years, marking an exceptionally successful academic year.

In recent years, the Venerable Master Hsing Yun Public Education Trust Fund has continuously supported outstanding teachers and schools, with 268 schools across Taiwan selected as the “13th Annual Three Acts of

Goodness Schools.” Encouragingly, 350 Three Acts of Goodness schools in the Philippines have all become zero-bullying campuses. The “Model Teacher Award” of the 12th Hsing Yun Education Award was presented to 20 educators from diverse fields such as special education, medicine, and religious studies. The 14th Hsing Yun Award for Global Chinese Literature recognized 25 recipients. We are grateful to all who have responded to the Venerable Master’s vision through donations, including BLIA Honorary President Wu Po-hsiung and his wife, Tai Mei-yu, who, on their 60th wedding anniversary, vowed to donate funds to continue the Venerable Master’s ideal of promoting education.

The BLIA World Buddha’s Light Scouts Jamboree was held at Nan Tien Temple in Australia, and the International BLIA Young Adult Division Leadership Conference took place in Berlin, Germany. Buddha’s Light youths worldwide jointly vowed, “Buddhism relies on me,” using the faith strength of the Three Acts of Goodness and the Four Givings to build a Pure Land and inherit the faith of Humanistic Buddhism.

Building on Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s successful repatriation of the head of a Buddha statue from Northern Qi, cross-strait relations reached new milestones in Buddhist cultural exchange. In March, the United Association of Humanistic Buddhism, Chunghua, initiated the “Donation of Buddhist Artifacts” and “Cross-Strait Humanistic Buddhism Exchange.” I led nearly 200 people to Beijing and held the “Buddhist Artifacts Donation Ceremony” at the National Museum of China. The ceremony was jointly inaugurated by Director Song Tao of the Taiwan Affairs Office, Minister Li Qun, and the presidential committee, donating 30 pieces of Shanxi Buddhist artifacts back to their homeland. This demonstrates the Taiwan Buddhist community’s spirit of “inheriting the past and ushering in the future,” realizing Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s grand vision of “cross-strait harmony, coexistence, and mutual prosperity.”

In October, I attended the Sixth World Buddhist Forum held in Ningbo, Zhejiang, and delivered a keynote speech, expressing views on the conference theme “Hand in Hand for Coexistence.” I believe that Buddhism’s universal values of equality and compassion will bring a dawn of peace to the world. I also hope that through such exchanges, we can strengthen consensus within the global Buddhist community.

The influence of Humanistic Buddhism is gradually becoming evident through various collaborative and academic exchanges. In early 2024, the Fo Guang Shan Institute of Humanistic Buddhism collaborated with the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Peking University, and Renmin University to host the “Memorial Symposium on the First Anniversary of Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s Passing: Global Buddhist Scholars Symposium on Humanistic Buddhism.” In May, the Institute co-organized with Academia Sinica a forum on “Humanistic Religion in Modern Society: Dialogue and Exchange Among Diverse Religions.” Likewise, the Humanistic Buddhism Research Centre at the University of Malaya, Fo Guang Shan Education Centre Malaysia, and Sin Chew Daily jointly organized a symposium at the University of Malaya commemorating the first anniversary of Master Hsing Yun’s passing, examining his contributions to Humanistic Buddhism in Malaysia. Moreover, on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of Nan Tien Temple in Australia, the temple was listed on the “New South Wales Heritage Register” by local government authorities. Concurrently, an oral history project was initiated, with materials to be permanently preserved by the State Library.

These events are not only academic gatherings but also manifestations of the spirit of Humanistic Buddhism. While rooted deeply in the soil of Eastern culture, we actively engage in dialogues and exchanges with various communities, bringing the Venerable Master’s ideals of Humanistic Buddhism to the world. We are grateful for the Venerable Master’s foresight and vision, as his compassion and wisdom continue to guide us on a path of exploration and innovation.

Faced with the increasingly urgent environmental challenges of human society, Fo Guang Shan has actively promoted environmental protection and sustainable development, achieving notable results through persistent efforts. At the 2024 Asia-Pacific Exposition for Sustainability, the *Merit Times* initiative “Merits Across Schools” was awarded the Asia-Pacific Sustainability Action Awards Gold Prize, while the Vegetarian Culture Festival received the Silver Award under the category of Good Health and Wellbeing Goals.

Under the advocacy of the Yixing Municipal Government, Dajue Temple, the ancestral temple of Fo Guang Shan, hosted the 2024 9th Yixing International Vegetarian Culture and Green Living Products Expo during the Labor Day holiday, marking the first post-pandemic resumption of this event. In November, at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29), BLIA made its first thematic presentation, elaborating on the relationship between Buddhism and environmental protection. In the days ahead, we will uphold the Venerable Master’s principles of “Environmental and Spiritual Preservation,” striving tirelessly for the sustainable development of the Earth and the well-being of humanity.

As for constructions, after 11 years of effort, the reconstruction of Tianlong Temple in Nanjing was completed in February. In June, Fo Guang Shan Thai Hua Temple in Bangkok and Fo Guang Shan Berlin in Germany were inaugurated. In September, the Venerable Master Hsing Yun Memorial Park at Fo Guang Shan Housui Temple in Gunma, Japan, was unveiled. October saw the completion and inauguration of Fo Guang Shan Hui Chung Temple after 12 years of construction, along with the consecration of its buddha statue. Additionally, Fo Guang Shan Seremban, Malaysia; the Main Shrine at Chung Tian Temple, Australia; Fo Guang Shan Ottawa, Canada; and San Bao Temple, San Francisco, held ground purification and beam-raising ceremonies.

Each completed temple stands as another beacon of Fo Guang Shan’s mission to propagate Humanistic Buddhism, deepening and continuing its spiritual legacy. In these temples, the monastic and lay communities of Fo Guang Shan adhere to the Venerable Master’s teachings by sharing the wisdom and compassion of Humanistic Buddhism so that everyone can be inspired by the light and strength of the Dharma.

In the face of natural disasters and suffering, Fo Guang Shan’s commitment to charitable Dharma propagation has never ceased. In January, a 7.6-magnitude earthquake struck Ishikawa Prefecture in Japan, causing widespread fires and tsunamis. BLIA members in Japan immediately initiated relief efforts and provided care. Similarly, in response to floods in Brazil and Sabah, Malaysia, BLIA members swiftly arrived on-site to offer assistance.

In mid-March, BLIA announced the “Chennai Village of Hope Education Project” during a parallel forum at the 68th United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68). On April 3rd, Taiwan was hit by a 7.2-magnitude earthquake, severely affecting Hualien. Fo Guang Shan assisted the Hualien County Government in disaster relief efforts and provided temporary shelters for affected residents. In May, the United Association of

Humanistic Buddhism, Chunghua, collaborated with the Catholic Diocese of Hualien to organize the “Religious Prayer Concert for the 0403 Earthquake: Musical Blessings from the Pacific Coast” at the Taipei Howard Civil Service International House. The concert aimed to heal the emotional trauma of the affected and bring hope for renewal through music.

Whenever disasters strike, Fo Guang Shan is always among the first to respond, providing material aid and emotional support. This not only reflects the compassionate spirit of Buddhism but also underscores Fo Guang Shan’s responsibility and commitment to society. Each act of emergency relief embodies the ideal of “universally benefiting heaven and earth,” and all participating BLIA members carry forward the compassionate spirit of the Venerable Master.

The Venerable Master advocated for using sports as a means of Dharma propagation, demonstrating the core principle of Humanistic Buddhism—integrating the Dharma into daily life so that people in various fields can experience its values. This year, Fo Guang Shan athletes achieved notable successes in sports competitions. In January, Nanhua University secured second place in the UBL University Baseball League. In March, Pu Men High School’s girls’ basketball team also placed second in the HBL High School Division A Basketball Tournament. The Guang Ming College track and field team participated in the 2024 Private Schools Athletic Association Regional Meet (PRISAA Regional Meet), winning 28 gold, 12 silver, and 2 bronze medals, earning the overall championship.

Athletes within the Fo Guang Shan educational system continue to receive recognition in sports. Six players from Nanhua University and Pu Men High School’s baseball teams were selected in the Chinese Professional Baseball League (CPBL) draft. Four players from Fo Guang University’s women’s basketball team were chosen for the Chinese Taipei women’s national team to compete in the Jones Cup. Among the standout performers in the Chinese Taipei team that recently won the WBSA Premier 12 baseball championship were Chen Po-ching and Chang Cheng-yu, both distinguished alumni of Nanhua University.

Globally, the Fo Guang Shan monastic and lay communities have achieved numerous honors. For example, the Fo Guang Shan Sutra Repository, planned and designed by the Venerable Master, received the National Architecture Gold Award. At the 2024 Religious Groups Awards Ceremony organized by the Ministry of the Interior, 14 Fo Guang Shan branch temples were honored with “The Best Religious Organization of Social Charity Promotion,” while Hai Tien Temple in Penghu received the dual awards of the “Award of Social Charity Promotion in 10 Years” and the “The Best Religious Organization of Social Charity Promotion.” Fushan Temple in Changhua was recognized as an “Outstanding Religious Organization” and awarded the “Low Carbon Certification Seal.”

Additionally, the Fo Guang Shan Headquarters received the “9th National Environmental Education Awards for Group Excellence,” the highest recognition in Taiwan’s environmental education sector. The Buddha Museum was awarded the Energy Management Award by SGS, and both the Buddha Museum and Brazil’s Fo Guang Shan Zulai Temple received Tripadvisor’s “Travellers’ Choice Best of the Best Award” and the “Certificate of Excellence Hall of Fame.”

Furthermore, Fo Guang Shan Foundation for Buddhist Culture and Education received the “2024 Social and Education Award” from the Ministry of Education, recognizing the excellent efforts of Fo Guang Shan in promoting

the Dharma through cultural and education endeavors, as well as contributing to social education. Moreover, 15 Buddha’s Light scout groups under Buddha’s Light Scouts, Chunghua, were recognized as Outstanding Scout Troops in Taiwan. The Buddha’s Light Scouts embody the spirit of the Three Acts of Goodness and the Four Givings through service to the society.

In the United States, Hsi Fang Temple has long led a team of volunteers to provide spiritual services at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego, earning the “President’s Volunteer Service Award.” In the Philippines, Fo Guang Shan Chu Un Temple has been rooted in Cebu for over 30 years, and the Guang Ming College Cebu has become a cradle for nurturing artistic talent. In recognition of its contributions to Cebu, Mayor Michael Rama presented the “Mayor’s Special Award” to the temple. Fo Guang Shan Singapore, BLIA Singapore, and 50 of Fo Guang Shan Toronto’s experienced volunteers were respectively awarded by the “Community Spirits Awards” from the Singapore government and the Legacy Award, recognizing their contribution to the service to the local communities and the disadvantaged. Additionally, four members of Malaysia’s Fo Guang Shan Defense Team were appointed as liaison officers for the Civil Defense Force of the State of Selangor.

On an individual level, Venerable Manshin of Fo Guang Shan New Zealand received the New Zealand Order of Merit, becoming the first Buddhist recipient of this honor in the country. Venerable Huichuan, the Deputy Abbot of Fo Guang Shan, was appointed by the Kaohsiung City Government as a municipal advisor to leverage the temple’s expertise in charity and cultural education to contribute to a brighter future for the city. In South America, Venerable Miao You, the Head Abbess of Fo Guang Shan South America, was certified as a Buddhist advisor for the União dos Escoteiros do Brasil (Union of Brazilian Scouts). This marks the first time in over a century that a religion other than Catholicism has received such recognition.

These joyful events and honors are the result of the tireless efforts of BLIA members worldwide. As always, “glory goes to the buddha, success goes to the community, benefit goes to the monastery, and merit goes to the devotees!”

In closing, I would like to share some important news. Since its groundbreaking on November 16, 1975, the Main Shrine of Fo Guang Shan has stood as the spiritual center of both monastics and devotees for nearly 50 years. Following the instructions of the Venerable Master many years ago, on December 8, a purification and blessing ceremony was held to mark the commencement of its renovation. The project is expected to take one year, aiming to ensure the sustainability of its Dharma propagation functions and to further showcase the Fo Guang spirit.

We are deeply grateful for your continued support and contributions. The entire Fo Guang Shan community will redouble its efforts in all areas. In the days ahead, we will remain committed to fulfilling the vision of the Founding Master, Venerable Master Hsing Yun, in propagating and practicing Humanistic Buddhism and building a pure land on Earth. May the Buddha’s compassion, wisdom, and light illuminate every corner of the world.

May you enjoy peace and auspiciousness, perfect in merit and wisdom.

Hsin Bau
Head Abbot
Chairperson, Fo Guang Board of Directors
New Year’s Day, 2025

(Translated by the FGS Institute of Humanistic Buddhism, Center of International Affairs)