Organizing the Postscript

Mingzhen

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The collected works on Buddhism of my late grandfather have finally been published. From their initiation, collection, and compilation to their editing and printing, this collection has taken six years to complete. Although it is called a collected works, it 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 personally inscribed the title of this book.

My wish to publish my grandfather’s collected works is not simply because I am his descendant, but because he was indeed a great master of practice and realization, and a Buddhist scholar who grasped the essence of the Buddhadharma. 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 receiving 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 after the world wars, 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 prajñā, benefits

practitioners, and hastens their accomplishment. Its true import lies in emphasizing that the purpose of practice is to seal the mind and attain genuine benefit.

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 is truly a shortcut to 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 widely sought out great teachings, studied under many masters, and received empowerment and Dharma transmission from several acharyas and gurus. Later, while directing the editing of The Great Compendium of Chinese Esoteric Buddhism, I came, through personal practice, to a deeper understanding of the profound significance of this great Dharma. I therefore resolved to publish this book.

From the 1920s until the present, this great Dharma has been transmitted and practiced widely both within China and abroad for only a little over sixty years. Its later students are countless, as are those who have attained accomplishment. Apart from an early poem, "Song of Liberation," and a farewell poem written before his retirement into seclusion, Dharma Master Dayu left no other writings. 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 characters, but regrettably almost all of the manuscripts he kept were destroyed. Everything included in this book was preserved by his disciples. Fortunately, its important portions—especially the sections on practice—remain intact and may be regarded as treasures for later students. Unlike ordinary commentaries on Buddhist scriptures, this book does not chiefly emphasize the study of doctrine and language. Yet, in order to provide support and guidance for practice, it explains accessible teachings, so as to inspire practitioners' potential, strengthen their faith, and set their causal foundation aright.

According to their dates of publication and contents, the collected works are divided into three main parts: (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 many Dharma uncles, 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.

The publication of this collected works also depended greatly on his personal mobilization of his disciples to gather my grandfather's writings from various places, while the disciples in Hangzhou gave particular assistance in organizing them. 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 Records of Chinese Lamp Teachings—offered sponsorship and support for the publication of this book.

I would also like especially to thank Xiangfu Chan Monastery in Wuxi for approving and sponsoring the printing of the Collected Works of Lay Practitioner Wang Xianglu, my late grandfather, as well as the Jinling Scriptural Press for its support and 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.

On the occasion of the publication of the Collected Works, I hereby extend my heartfelt and profound thanks to all the individuals and organizations mentioned above. May this merit extend universally to all, so that all sentient beings and I may together attain Buddhahood.