

Chan 禪 Magazine

Autumn 2007



Chan Meditation Center

Institute of Chung-Hwa Buddhist Culture

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“Buddhahood is not apart from our ordinary mind, to be found outside of it. There is no buddha out there with a specific form or appearance. If we constantly seek buddhahood in a certain form, different from our own grasping and self-centered mind, we are bound to fail. A buddha outside of our own intrinsic mind does not exist, since buddhahood *is* our intrinsic mind.”

**– Chan Master Sheng Yen,
from his commentary on
the letters of Chan Master
Dahui Zhonghao.**

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Founder/Teacher

Chan Master Ven. Dr. Sheng Yen

Editor-in-chief

David Berman

Coordinator

Virginia Tan

Photography

John Feng, Jerry Roach

Contributing editors

Ernie Heau, Kevin Mathewson, Virginia Tan, Wei Tan, Guogu

Contributors

Rikki Asher, Tina Kacandes, Jeffrey Kung, Rebecca Li, Mike Morical, Bruce Rickenbacker, Ayn Steele, Wei Tan, Tan Yee Wong (Chang Ji Fa Shi)

Administrator

Chang Wu Fa Shi

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From The Editor

In May, Republican candidates for president held their first debate, during which they were asked to raise their hands if they did not believe in evolution. Senator Sam Brownback of Kansas raised his hand, but felt compelled to elaborate in an op-ed published in The New York Times May 31 :

“The heart of the issue,” he wrote, “Is that we cannot drive a wedge between faith and reason. I believe wholeheartedly that there cannot be any contradiction between the two... The truths of science and faith are complementary: they deal with very different questions, but they do not contradict each other because the spiritual order and the material order were created by the same God.”

The Senator’s faith is his own, and I do not question it, but his reasoning is self-contradictory—he asserts that faith and reason are “complementary,” but then promptly subordinates the latter to the former. Darwin’s world was created by Sam’s God—problem solved.

The real problem is that the Senator’s not being entirely sincere. He’s professing equanimity when he actually believes in a strict pyramidal hierarchy, with his religion at the top, and all other viewpoints beneath.

But taking Senator Brownback to task is not my purpose. In fact, I suspect that every single one of us is stuck in the same rut: we all believe whatever we believe to the exclusion of whatever contradicts it. Those who believe in God’s creation do not truly believe in evolution, they just tolerate it as possibly descrip-

tive of the details, and those who believe in science do not truly believe in Genesis, even if they consider it the greatest metaphor ever told.

Now, there are many—I have met many—who believe that Buddhism is not prey to such prejudice. We cultivate true equanimity; we deny nothing; we are the original Big Tent. We welcome monotheist and atheist alike, we admit to the existence of whatever-you-please...but we have a secret. Privately, just between us, we agree that all the stuff OTHERS believe in is fundamentally empty, illusory, impermanent, caused by and dependent on other things. God? Sure. Omniscient, omnipotent, and eternal? Tsk, not so much. The true nature of their God, according to Buddhism, is the same as the nature of the half-eaten English muffin drying out on my kitchen counter.

In other words, we believe in the same pyramid Sam Brownback believes in, we just put our own favorite thing (or favorite no thing) at the top. And if that’s true, it makes us equally insincere. Just as the Senator hides the wolf of his faith in the sheep’s clothing of his respect for reason, we Buddhists cultivate a kind of outward friendliness toward the beliefs of others while harboring the deep conviction that they’re all finally unimportant, like the imaginary friends of children. It’s no wonder the last Pope had a bad attitude toward Buddhism—he was a good theologian, and he undoubtedly saw that despite the warmth of my smile, my doctrine was condescending to his.

The question is: What's the alternative? How can I maintain the faith that is the necessary foundation for practice, and at the same time avoid the conflicts that arise if I follow doctrine to its logical conclusions?

For me, the answer is one that might not sit well with all the grandees that have contributed to the more than four million pages of Buddhist doctrine: doctrine doesn't travel well, and shouldn't actually be followed anywhere, least of all to its logical conclusions. In other words, the teachings are not the truth, and my understanding of the teachings even

less so. I, like the Senator, have faith in the teachings and the ability to reason and, like the Senator, I find that my faith and reason do not conflict with each other because, just like the Senator, I find that they both have the same author.

* * *

P.S. You have likely received this Autumn issue of Chan Magazine shortly after having received the Summer issue, which was significantly delayed by a shipping error. Please accept our apologies for that delay.



Photo: Jerry Roach

Letter from Master Dahui to Li Xianqian

Commentary by
Chan Master Sheng Yen

Master Dahui Zhonghao (1089-1163) was one of the most luminous and prolific Chan masters of the Southern Song dynasty. Already a monk at the age of 17, he very quickly captured the attention of some of the eminent masters of his time. According to some accounts, in mid-career, offended by the way the practice of gong'ans (Jap. koans) had, in his opinion, deteriorated into intellectual word games, he burned his set of the printing blocks of his own teacher Yuanwu's compilation of gong'ans of past masters. Most of the lost gong'ans were later restored in the Blue Cliff Record.

Once, he addressed his monks with these (to us) cryptic yet vivid words: "Deshan's stick. Linji's shout. Today, I present them to you. Heaven is so high. The earth is so vast. So don't be just adding more shit on top of a shit pile. Get rid of your bones and wash out your guts. I'll take three steps backwards and let you discuss this. Tell me how you will discuss it!" (Quoted from Andy Ferguson's Zen's Chinese Heritage [Wisdom Books])

One of the more notable aspects of Dahui's career was that many of his disciples were

lay people. Two of the laywomen to whom he transmitted (acknowledged as enlightened) were given Dharma names Miaodao and Miaozong. (One of Dahui's several names was Miaoxi.) Both women later became nuns and abbesses. Many of his male lay disciples were government officials. This resulted in Dahui's not being immune to the politics of the turbulent Song dynasty, and when one of his patrons was banished, Dahui was forced into exile, taking with him one hundred monks to Hunan, then to a malaria-infested region in Kwangtung, where half the sangha perished.

Fifteen years later, a scion of the royal house who heard him lecture restored Dahui to his former eminence. According to the records of the ancient Chan masters, throughout his career Dahui guided many monastic and lay disciples to enlightenment. Before Dahui's death, the emperor Xiaozong bestowed on him the name by which we call him, Dahui (Great Wisdom).

One day when he was 75, Dahui announced to his monks that he would be leaving for a journey on the morrow. The next day, he penned this verse:

*Birth is thus
Death is thus
Verse or no verse
What's the fuss?*

Setting his brush aside, he lay down and died.

The following article is a commentary by Master Sheng Yen on a letter by Dahui to one of his probably lay disciples. This article will be part of a book based on lectures given at the Chan Meditation Center in Queens, New York, on the letters of Dahui. Oral translation of this lecture was by Jimmy Yu (Guogu), transcriber unknown, edited by Ernest Heau.

To Li Hsien-ch'ien*

Clear the Mind

Buddha said, if you want to know the realm of buddhahood, you must make your mind as clear as empty space and leave false thinking and all grasping far behind, causing your mind to be unobstructed wherever it may turn. The realm of buddhahood is not some external world where there is a formal "Buddha"—it's the realm of the wisdom of a self-awakened sage.

Once you are determined that you want to know this realm, you do not need adornment, cultivation, or realization to attain it. You must clear away the stains of afflictions from alien sensations that have been on your mind since beginningless time, (so that your mind) is as broad and open as empty space, detached from all the clinging of the discriminating intellect, and your false, unreal, vain thoughts too are like empty space. Then this wondrous, effortless mind will be unimpeded wherever it goes.

— *From Swampland Flowers (Grove Press), J. C. Cleary (trans.)*

** The name of Dahui's disciple is rendered Li Hsien-ch'ien in the Wade-Giles system of romanization used by Cleary, and Li Xianqian in the newer Pinyin system.*

In this letter from Master Dahui to one of his disciples, Li Xianqian, Dahui says that buddhahood can only be known by a mind as clear as empty space. To do this, one must forego all false thinking and grasping, allowing the mind to be unobstructed wherever it may turn. This clear state is the "realm of the

wisdom of a self-awakened sage." These ideas are found in the *Lankavatara Sutra*, which teaches that all sentient beings are innately buddhas.

In the context of Dahui's words, there are two meanings of "mind." There is ordinary

mind that is characterized by false thinking and grasping. False thinking consists of thoughts that arise from having a sense of self. It includes not just unwholesome, negative thoughts, but also distinctions as to pleasure or pain, good or bad, right or wrong. You may also call it illusory thinking, or delusion. Grasping is any attachment or desire; like delusion, it is deep-rooted in ordinary mind.

The second meaning of mind occurs in the phrase “causing your mind to be unobstructed wherever it may turn.” This mind is the original, pure bodhi-mind, untainted by illusion and attachment. In Dahui’s words, this is the “realm of the wisdom of the self-awakened sage.”

So these two occurrences of “mind” in Dahui’s opening statement have different meanings. In the Chinese text, these words, translated as “mind,” are represented by different ideograms. The first refers to the Sixth Consciousness of the Yogachara, or Mind-Only School. This Mahayana school analyzed all experience into the so-called Eight Consciousnesses (organs) of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind, ego (self), and the storehouse consciousness (*alaya*). The school taught that all experience is “mind-only” — that things have no reality except as processes of the mind. In the Yogachara teaching, the interaction of the Eight Consciousnesses results in the mental states Dahui refers to as “false thinking and grasping.”

The second Chinese character refers to the realized mind of bodhi, “unobstructed wherever it may turn.” The path of practice is to transform ordinary mind to bodhi-mind; to go from ordinary consciousness to the realm

of wisdom, untainted by discriminating thought. This realized mind is bodhi-mind, or wisdom.

So, Dahui’s first sentence provides a complete method for buddhahood — cultivate a mind like empty space, a mind that does not discriminate and seeks nothing, unobstructed at every turn.

The realm of buddhahood is not some external world where there is a formal “Buddha,” it’s the realm of the wisdom of the self-awakened sage.

Buddhahood is not apart from our ordinary mind, to be found outside of it. There is no buddha out there with a specific form or appearance. Buddhahood cannot be experienced this way. If we put down all grasping and self-centeredness, our buddha-nature naturally manifests, springing from the natural ground of our being. If we constantly seek buddhahood in a certain form, different from our own grasping and self-centered mind, we are bound to fail. A buddha outside of our own intrinsic mind does not exist, since buddhahood *is* our intrinsic mind.

When Shakyamuni attained bodhi did his body become the body of a buddha? He had a body before attaining buddhahood. He had the same body after buddhahood. Before buddhahood that body was not a buddha; likewise, afterwards, that body was also not a buddha. So what does it mean to attain buddhahood? If one thinks “I am a buddha,” that is discriminating mind, not bodhi. Thus, there can be no buddha inside. If buddha exists outside, how can one possibly attain it? If bodhi is neither inside, nor outside, it must



Photo: Jerry Roach

be empty and without boundaries. So when Dahui says that buddhahood is as clear as empty space this is not mere analogy.

Let's look at the phrase "wisdom as a self-awakened sage," which is found only in the *Lankavatara Sutra*. When we let go of all attachments, self-awakening happens. We finally realize that all our mental activities are, and always have been, illusory. This is really what one is awakened to. When it happens, the wisdom of a buddha will also manifest. There are two stages here: first you have the self-awakening, then wisdom manifests.

People can intellectually grasp what Dahui is saying in this letter. But is it useful for practice? There's a saying that if your mind is turned by the environment you are deluded, but if you can turn the environment, you are achieving something. This has to be properly understood. Knowing that your own mind is afflicted with illusions, you will be less vulnerable to the environment, and that is good. But if people want to aggressively convert others to think like themselves, this can lead to more problems. It is up to you to do something about clearing your own mind.

Let's look at the second paragraph:

Once you have determined that you want to know this realm, you do not need adornment, cultivation, or realization to attain it.

People may think that to attain buddhahood one needs to cultivate wisdom and virtue, as if adorning oneself with merit guarantees buddhahood. Master Dahui says that to believe this is false thinking and grasping. If

“...DISCRIMINATIONS DO NOT APPEAR IN A BUDDHA'S MIND. SO WE SHOULD LET GO OF ALL DISCRIMINATION, ATTACHMENT AND SELF-CENTEREDNESS; PUT DOWN EVERYTHING, INCLUDING ATTACHMENT TO VIRTUE, TO REACH THIS SELF-AWAKENING NAMED WISDOM. WHO AMONG YOU CAN DO THIS RIGHT NOW?”

buddhahood is a matter of being adorned by wisdom and lots of virtues, then a buddha would be attached to such things. These discriminations do not appear in a buddha's mind. So we should let go all discrimination, attachment, and self-centeredness; put down everything, including attachment to virtue, to reach this self-awakening named wisdom. Who among you can do this right now?

To be able to put down illusion, we need to practice the Six Paramitas (perfections) of generosity, morality, patience, diligence, meditation, and wisdom. Practicing the paramitas, we may accumulate virtue. But the aim of practice is not to gain virtue, or to become a buddha, but to let go of self-centeredness.

This advice is not part of Dahui's text, although it may be implicit. I want to correct



Photo: Jerry Roach

any impression that, because we are originally buddha, we are already enlightened; hence, there's no need to practice. That idea is pure self-deception. Someone believing that will be awakened in the Year of the Donkey, and there is no Year of the Donkey. So, practicing Chan can be poisonous; if not used properly it can kill our life of wisdom.

You must clear away the stains of afflictions from alien sensations that have been on your mind since beginningless time.

Here “mind” again refers to the discriminating mind of the Sixth Consciousness. Let's say someone is ill with cancer, which is alien to the body. To restore the patient's health, the doctors may excise the cancer. In ordinary mind, our delusion is the cancer. By analogy,

to regain one's original mind, one needs to clear away all the “alien sensations” one has carried around.

The Chinese term for this kind of defilement means “gassy stuff,” referring to the transient nature of illusions. “Stuff” refers to their obscuring effect on the mind. So our illusions are gassy stuff that covers up our original bodhi-mind. We need to clear away all of this gassy stuff, which has been with us since time without beginning, until not a single wisp remains. Then, our mind will be like empty space — open, completely unobstructed. With any speck of doubt left, there will still be egocentrism. When the mind is completely free from illusion, discriminating mind does not exist. You would then experience liberation.

Do not become too obsessed about this. Constantly worrying about it may even accelerate the disease. Someone who is not too obsessed, has no fear and no attachment to their own life, may experience improvement or recovery. There are numerous examples of such cures, not just to Buddhists. For example, a person who is ill may concentrate on repeating “Guanyin Pusa,” the Chinese name for Avalokiteshvara, the Bodhisattva of Compassion. By filling their mind with this mantra, they may attain a kind of clarity and freedom from their problems.

Through this kind of meditation, it is also possible to develop “correspondence” or “affinity” with a buddha or bodhisattva. A person repeating Avalokiteshvara’s name in deep concentration may be freed from an obsession with their illness. In fact, he or she can become very relaxed with that part of the body, which was previously very agitated, very intense. With relaxation, changes, transformations, can happen.

Likewise, when a person has psychological problems that they cannot put down, constantly worrying, they build layer upon layer of vexation. Their mental scope becomes narrower and narrower. This impasse can lead to thoughts of death or suicide. Analogously, to bring our minds to a healthier state, it is better to approach practice in a more relaxed, not too obsessed, manner. The idea after all, is to develop “effortless mind.”

Dahui’s letter closes with such a thought:

Then this wondrous effortless mind will be unimpeded wherever it goes.

So when we clear away all the “stains of affliction,” we finally understand that they are all unreal. The mind becomes like empty space — wondrous, effortless, unimpeded wherever it turns. This is indeed at a very high level; it corresponds to the eighth of the ten stages, or bhumis, on the bodhisattva path to buddhahood. This stage also corresponds to the phrase in the *Diamond Sutra*, “Without abiding, give rise to bodhi-mind.” Without attaching to anything, the mind still functions through its wisdom; without effort, it moves unimpeded. This clearing of the mind is the aim of practice. We should believe we can truly achieve this state of wondrous, effortless mind. The mind then encompasses everything without a sense of self, responding to any situation without any attachments.

Even though Master Dahui’s letter is brief, it offers some very useful guidelines. Always, in any situation, put aside deluded thinking. We still need to practice and we still need our wisdom to deal with events. If you have vexations, practice giving, making offerings, and practice the precepts. Make practice a habit. Like a patient who wants to clear away a cancer, we want to clear away the gassy stuff in our mind.

Once again, the gassy stuff is the content of our habitual illusions. What are these illusions? They are vexations generated by our attachments, that is, anything we cling to or grasp at: wrong ideas, emotions, love, ambitions, anger, fear, the various things that benefit, threaten, or concern us. To practice Chan means to begin clearing the gassy stuff that obscures our original mind of bodhi.

THE EYE

Scales fall
as fog lifts.
Oh, crystal window,
catch a glimpse.
The blinds
are crashing down.

—*Mike Morical*



Photo: Jerry Roach

Columbia Establishes Sheng Yen Chair

**Professor Chun-fang Yu will be the first
Sheng Yen Professor of Chinese Buddhist Studies**

On May 10th, Columbia University in the City of New York, in collaboration with the Sheng Yen Education Foundation of Taiwan, celebrated the establishment of the Sheng Yen Professorship of Chinese Buddhist Studies in both the Religion and the East Asian Languages and Cultures Departments. This is the first permanent chair in the study of Chinese Buddhism to be established in any university in the world. It is an historic watershed not only for Chinese Buddhism in the West, but also for the benefit of humanity. The chair has been established to honor Chan Master Sheng Yen's lifelong commitment to the spiritual education of humanity and to his scholarly research in Buddhism.

*The chair's first occupant, Professor Chun-fang Yu, was born in China and grew up in Taiwan. She graduated from Tunghai University in 1959 with a double major in English literature and Chinese philosophy, received an MA in English from Smith College in 1961 and a Ph.D. in Religion from Columbia University, specializing in the history of Chinese Buddhism, in 1973. Professor Yu heads the graduate program in Chinese Buddhist Studies at Columbia, and is on the faculty of both the Religion Department and the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures. Her major publications include: *The Renewal of Buddhism in China: Chu-hung and the Late Ming Synthesis* (Columbia University Press, 1981) and *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avolokitesvara* (Columbia University Press, 2001). She took refuge with Master Sheng Yen in 1976 and has been his disciple since.*

The following is the text of Professor Yu's acceptance of the Sheng Yen Professorship of Chinese Buddhist Studies.

We are here tonight to celebrate the establishment of the Sheng Yen Professorship in Chinese Buddhist Studies. I would like to take this opportunity to celebrate the life and work of Master Sheng Yen and to offer my thoughts on the significance of this generous endowment. Master Sheng Yen is a Chan meditation master but also an educator and a renowned scholar of Chinese Buddhism, specializing in Buddhist philosophy, history and monastic discipline. When he arrived in New York in 1976, fresh with a Ph.D. degree from Ja-

pan, instead of confining his activities to the pastoral guidance of the immigrant Chinese community, he set out deliberately to teach Chan meditation to Americans. For the last thirty years, he has divided his time between New York and Taipei, tirelessly training generations of Chan practitioners with methods skillfully adapted to the modern age. He is, at the same time, a dedicated scholar and a prolific writer. When his collected work was published recently, it amounted to 100 volumes, covering topics as diverse as Tiantai



Photo: Jerry Roach

Left to right: Qingyen Tsai, Executive Director of the Sheng Yen Education Foundation; Prof. Chun-fang Yu; Foundation Pres. Jianchang Shih; Prof. Pei Yang

and Huayan philosophy, Vinaya or monastic discipline, commentaries on major Buddhist scriptures, histories of Indian, Tibetan, Chinese, Japanese and Korean Buddhism, studies on Chan Buddhism and comparative religions as well as popular books introducing Buddhist teachings to the common people. Seventeen years ago he founded the Dharma Drum Mountain as a center for teaching a socially engaged Buddhism. His call for spiritual environmentalism, namely, to purify our environment by first purifying our mind, has met with enthusiastic response from people of all walks of life in Taiwan. Indeed, Master Sheng Yen is an exemplary leader of contemporary Chinese Buddhism, combining in one person a deep personal devotion with an equally profound concern for the welfare of sentient beings. The vitality of Buddhism in Taiwan during the last 30 years is a very noteworthy phenomenon. With increased communication between Taiwan and mainland China, this new model of Taiwanese Buddhism has also been eagerly followed by the monastics and lay people in China. I hope that with the establishment of this chair, more students will become interested in studying ancient as well as contemporary Chinese Buddhism, of which Master Sheng Yen is a shining example.

I hope that the future direction of Chinese Buddhist studies will include at least the following (these are also what Master Sheng Yen has advocated):

First, I hope that more attention will be paid to the development of Chinese Buddhism in the medieval and late imperial times (after the 10th century). For a very long time, scholars regarded Chinese Buddhism as having reached the so-called “golden age” in the Tang dynasty (618-907), but together with Master

Sheng Yen, a handful of scholars (myself included) studied this later period in the 1970s, and it is gratifying to see that this exclusive emphasis on the Tang is no longer the case. When we remember that it was during the long centuries after the Tang that Neo-Confucianism was formulated, that new forms of Daoism emerged and new sectarian religions made their appearances, producing at the same time new types of literature such as the recorded sayings and precious volumes, it becomes abundantly clear that medieval and late imperial China was an exciting time intellectually and religiously. And Buddhism played important roles in all these developments. The interaction between Buddhism and the Confucian and Daoist religious traditions was so close that it is just as impossible to truly understand the latter without the former as the other way around. It is not for no reason that Buddhism, one of several imported foreign religions in China, alone succeeded in becoming a genuinely Chinese religion so that it could be included in the slogan “Three Teachings in One”.

The second direction the study of Chinese Buddhism should take which, again, has been a central concern of Master Sheng Yen, is to investigate the relationship between the Chinese Buddhist traditions with the Japanese, Korean, Tibetan and Theravada Buddhist traditions. Master Sheng Yen visited Japanese Zen masters while studying in Japan and has continued his contact with Japanese Buddhist scholars. He also initiated a dialogue with His Holiness the Dalai Lama in 1998. In addition to intra-Buddhist dialogue, he has participated actively in inter-religious dialogue with other world religions. He firmly believes that mutual understanding of religions is one of the most effective ways to promote peace and

harmony in the world. Indeed, the traditional view of a one-way transmission of Buddhism from India to China and then to Korea and finally to Japan can no longer be maintained. East Asia was and is culturally an organic and integrated entity and this was particularly true in the case of Buddhism. Scriptures, commentaries, images and monks went from China to Korea and Japan. But the reverse direction was equally significant in the cross-fertilization process. A monolithic national Buddhism is a myth. Korean and Japanese monks would more often identify themselves by their ordination lines and monastic lineages than by their nationalities. This was clearly the view held by the Chinese Buddhist community, for the Chinese compilers of Biographies of Eminent Monks included biographies of Indians, Central Asians, Japanese, and Koreans. There is, however, no section on "Korean Monks" or "Japanese Monks." Their biographies were subsumed under the traditional categories of translators, meditators, thaumaturgists, and so on. Both the writers and the subjects of this literature transcended national and cultural boundaries. Looking beyond East Asia, conversations with South Asian, Southeast Asian, Tibetan, and Western European and North American Buddhists will be equally mutually beneficial. Buddhism is the first and oldest of the major world religions. In its 2500-year history, as it moved into various regions, it interacted with the host cultures and developed in astonishingly creative new ways. It is through comparing these various traditions that we can come to understand both the unique character of Chinese Buddhism and its common heritage shared with other Buddhist traditions.

Finally, I believe the fruitful way to study Chinese Buddhism, and for that matter, any re-

ligious tradition, is to combine history, texts (both literary and visual texts), material culture and as much as possible field work. For a student in this field, training in languages and scriptural proficiency are as desirable and necessary as literacy in art, anthropology and sociology.

Columbia University has a long and splendid tradition in East Asian and religious studies within which Buddhist Studies is a strong component. It is therefore most fitting that the Sheng Yen Chair is located in both departments. I hope that students of Columbia now and in the future will have the opportunity to study Chinese Buddhism together with East Asian history, literature, art and culture as well as the major religious traditions of the world. This is an opportunity which I did not have while growing up in Taiwan. In my college days there was no department of religion or courses on religion offered in universities. My introduction to Buddhism was by way of Chinese history, literature and philosophy. It was not until I came to Columbia as a graduate student that I had the chance to take formal courses in Buddhism and Chinese religion. It was my good fortune to decide to come to Columbia instead of another institution to pursue my graduate studies. I also count myself most fortunate that I met Master Sheng Yen in 1976 and became one of the first four students who took the three-month course on Chan Buddhism under him. In Buddhism, one speaks of the central role that causes and conditions, or *yinyuan*, play in one's life. I am favored by the extraordinary *yinyuan* I have had with both Master Sheng Yen and Columbia University. I hope I can in a small measure meet the enormous challenge of being designated the first occupant of this chair.

What Had I Gotten Myself Into ?

Retreat Report by M.L.

When my wife returned from the Western Zen retreat in 2002 she was very happy. I had been filling my days with my job in mid-town Manhattan, putting the children on the bus and tucking them in at night. I was happy to hear her talk of the retreat, but it sounded very strange and I remember feeling that I wanted her to stop talking about it. It was like hearing about a summer vacation from one's classmates in the fall. Enough already.

Master Sheng Yen has transmitted Chan to only a few Westerners. One of them, Master John Crook, has a retreat center in England, where he is the leader of the Western Chan Fellowship. He led a retreat in Pine Bush in 2002 and again this spring.

When March came and the retreat was weeks away, I began to get nervous. I have a 10-12 hour a day management position for a Wall Street firm. Much of my day is spent planning and actively managing multiple teams and projects. It is always engaging, frequently interesting but sometimes exhausting. I spend some time each day meditating, but I know that my practice is not as constant and diligent as it should be.

The last thing that I felt I needed was to arise at the crack of dawn, abandon reading, writing or talking – with complete strangers. On

the other hand, I still wanted to find out what the retreat was all about – what had made my wife so excited? As the day approached, I latched onto one thought: Desert Island. I would treat the retreat as if I had washed up on a foreign shore.

We escaped New York on Friday afternoon, and although we had left with plenty of time, we thought that we were late. We threaded our way across the Tappan Zee Bridge and made our way to the retreat center. It was a beautiful spring day, just before the leaves started to emerge.

After parking and getting setup in our rooms, we awaited the beginning. The daily schedule and a task rotation were posted on the wall – sweep floors, clean windows.... what had I gotten myself into?

When we had gathered that evening, in a large square, looking around at each other and the place, we met John. Seeming very academic, with bristling black eyebrows, he looked quizzically at all of us. We all took a turn telling the group who we were and what we hoped to achieve in the retreat – why we were there.

John then gave one of his first talks on the retreat. He started each talk somewhat slowly, at times digressing into anecdotes to make



Photo: Jerry Roach

his point. Once or twice in his talks he would use faces and voices to act out the story that he used to illustrate his point. I had heard some of the stories before, but when John told them, I felt as though I were hearing them fresh.

His first talks started us on a journey. I can't recall if it was the first night, but I remember that he spoke of the inquisitive nature of Chan practice. He noted that Western psychotherapy had a common goal with Chan in that they both involved looking into ourselves and attempting to find our place within the world. Chan practice was truly a journey towards the truth about our buddha-nature, an inquisitive process that required courage, patience and guidance.

The next morning, in the dark: a sound. The morning clapping of boards woke us and we sprung up, quickly dressed, and crossed to the meditation hall for some much needed tea.

In the dark we huddled outside the hall. John led us, silently, through some exercises. At first, I thought this pretty strange, but over the days I looked forward to the day's routine. The stars still shone down on us as we twisted and huffed through some stretching. The air was crisp and the countryside was waking up with us.

That first day we became more familiar with the routine. There was a relaxing combination of structure and freedom. One could say that the day was divided into different kinds of meditation. Besides sitting, we practiced chanting and walking meditation. One could also say that we had working and eating meditation, for each of these activities was carried out in mindful silence. I found that

while working and eating, I could set aside some of the concentration on my internal questions and gather my thoughts around one task – paring away extraneous thoughts as one might trim a bush.

The different meditations of the retreat were the background for the main activity. As I mentioned above, John emphasized the primary thrust of Chan practice as an inquiry into our self-nature. After the second day of the retreat, John introduced an exercise that became the most dynamic of the Western Zen Retreat. It is called the “communication exercise.” Without going into detail, it is a way that each of us could explore a question, not always the same one, but one of a progression of questions that would provide a focal point for our meditation.

The beginners, as I certainly was, started with the difficult question: Who am I? Several of our meditation periods were devoted to exploring these questions verbally, but without conversation. We each had a period of time to express, to a single listening individual, the answer to our particular question. Of course, it was an exploration, a challenge to put into words what progress we had made towards the answer. This exercise, for anyone who has been in therapy, particularly with a very passive therapist, will have a familiar feel to it. The experience of having a non-participatory listener helped to coalesce my thoughts about the question.

I developed a sense of kinship with the people that were with me on the retreat. Although I had not had a direct conversation with any of them, I felt as though we were all in this together. I knew that many of the other people were working as hard as I was on their par-

ticular questions. Most of us had profound experiences in our journey. While working on our communication exercises, I could peripherally hear others talking, sometimes laughing, sometimes crying. I felt completely present – there was no other place to be, mentally or physically.

When the fifth morning came, we had a brief closing ceremony and John addressed the group. We had to take our questions with us. We had a lot to be thankful for and he congratulated the group on its hard work. He urged us to take with us an active approach. As Buddhists, we have to engage the world and not live apart from it. Events in the world outside the retreat center are more serious

than ever, requiring each of us to be actively involved in changing the world for the better whether through social activism, protest or voting.

As we drove away from the retreat center, my wife and I had a lot to talk about. I was happy that we both went to the retreat. None of the other participants had been there with a spouse (so far as I knew). From experience, I knew that the partner of a retreat participant couldn't understand what we had been through. I got to ask her about her experience, and in turn, I told her about mine. I listened with a changed attitude: more mindful and aware. It wasn't long before we were talking about coming back next year.



Photo: Jerry Roach

The Past

News from the Chan Meditation Center and the DDMBA Worldwide

Master Sheng Yen Recommends Moral Philosophy

On June 30 DDM hosted a seminar entitled “Purification of the Mind and Moral Philosophy in Modern Times” at the Grand Hotel in Taipei City. The aim was to encourage people to adopt ethical practices in their lives.

Academics, executives and government officials were among the audience at the two-hour long discussion. In opening remarks, Chang Chun-Hsiung, head of the government’s Department of Administration, said that while many in Taiwan feel economic prosperity is the key achievement of recent years, others have been seeking to instill ethical practices and purify the mind. In this light he expressed his appreciation for Master Sheng Yen’s teaching.

Fredrick Fu, former president of the Control Office, observed that selfishness, hatred and poverty are causes of chaos in the 21st century, citing terrorism and environmental devastation as examples, and noting that prospects for the future did not seem bright, with the young so often driven to emulate selfish millionaires and rock stars. The remedy, he noted, is to change the way people think.

Liu Chunlaung, former president of National Tsing Hua University, concurred, also point-

ing out that as social networks become more intricate and extended, it is increasingly important to embrace ethical practices in our relations with others. Noting that to do this well one needs a clear mind, Liu urged young people to immerse themselves in Buddhism for spiritual enrichment.

Master Sheng Yen affirmed that ethical practice is not obsolete, but is something people must emphasize more diligently nowadays, stressing that moral philosophy is a combination of responsibility, service to others and



Photo: Jerry Roach

devotion. Cultivating these values in dealing with others sows seeds in our minds that can lead to social harmony in Taiwan and elsewhere. He further stated that sages in the past, both in the West and the East, all placed public interest above self interest. If more people do this, eventually peace will come.

Fundraiser Nets \$200K for New Chan Center in NY

On May 19, DDMBA threw a fundraising bash at the Laguardia Marriot Hotel to help finance a new Chan Meditation Center in New York.

With turnout in excess of 300 people and generous giving over the course of a lively evening of videos and auctioneering, organizers of the event deemed it a splendid success.

Guests included the Venerable Guo Dong, who flew in from Taiwan to highlight the event's importance, Andrew Hsia, Director-General of the Taipei Economic & Cultural Office in New York, Li Zehou, President of the New York Office of the World Journal, and author Wong Dinghun, along with numerous community members and scores of monks and nuns from the New York metropolitan area.

It had been hoped that Master Sheng Yen himself would travel from Taiwan to attend this event in furtherance of a goal that he has long considered to be of major importance, but at the last moment his health prevented him from making the journey.

A delectable dinner served as prologue to the evening's main events – a DVD of Shifu urging people to donate, and an auction of numerous paintings, sculptures, porcelains and other items collected by Center volunteers.

The high point of the evening came when Taiwanese-American New York State Assemblywoman Ellen Yang offered her services as auctioneer for works of calligraphy by Master Sheng Yen, for which bidding started at \$10,000 apiece. Also on sale were items of wooden furniture from Shifu's former study. With the sale of other collectibles and objets d'art, proceeds from the event exceeded \$200,000 – still shy of the million-plus figure anticipated for the project's total budget, but a handsome beginning.

(Shifu's calligraphy has also been brought to bear to promote other DDM activities recently as some 481 of his works made a 4-city tour of Taiwan this past summer to generate support for Dharma Drum University).

The existing Chan Center in Elmhurst Queens, founded by Master Sheng Yen in 1979 as the center of Chan teaching in North America, has afforded decades of service, but the building is aging and the community has long since grown too big for it.

The future center will also be in Queens, in a larger and newer facility, closer to public transportation. Ultimately the initiative to establish a new center forms part of DDMBA's drive to become an NGO registered with the UN and collaborating with other worldwide religious organizations to foster peace in the world.

Seeds of Dharma in Croatia

Early in July Zarko Andricevic and Djordje Cvijic, founders of DDM Croatia, sat down to talk with Venerable Guo Yuan and Venerable Guo Xiang at the DDM World Center for Buddhist Education. As the early morning sun flooded

the inside of the Chan Hall amid the chattering of cicadas, Zarko and Djordje recounted their journey from early studies of yoga in the 1980's to the founding of Croatia's oldest and largest Buddhist center, with numerous Chan retreats along the way, including a 49-day Huatou retreat led by Master Sheng Yen in 1998. Here are excerpts from their conversation.

Q: "More than 90% of Croatians are Catholics. Can you tell us how you found out about Buddhism in this Catholic culture?"

Zarko: "It was about thirty years ago when I was young. As a teacher of martial arts and yoga, I had always wondered about the meaning of existence, so I turned to Eastern philosophy. Buddhism was the philosophy that responded to my spiritual questions. This was how I came to learn about Buddhism.

"In the early 1980's, I began to run groups for practicing meditation and studying the Dharma. It was very difficult to study Dharma in Croatia in the beginning, because I had only two Buddhist books in Croatian, and very little information on where to find more. So I did all I could to purchase Buddhist books in English for translation. Although it was difficult, I was very enthusiastic.

"In 1992, I established the first Buddhist center in Zagreb, Croatia's capital. From here I started looking for Buddhist masters, which was how I met Ven. Master Sheng Yen. In 1997, I flew to New York to attend a three-day Chan retreat led by the Master himself at Dharma Drum Retreat Center, and invited Shifu to come to Croatia to teach the Dharma. He was exactly the Buddhist master we were looking for.

"After that, the Buddhist center's operation became much more regular, and membership increased to 'community' size in 1998. Now, there are close to 500 members who regularly participate in a variety of activities. Next year, in 2008, the center will celebrate its 10th anniversary."

Djordje: "I'm from a small town a hundred miles from Zagreb. My first contact with Buddhism was from a special meeting with two Sri Lankan monks, whom I helped with some translation work. But I practiced meditation very early on, even before this meeting.

"The contact with these monks made me begin to explore the meaning of life. I suddenly realized that Buddhism was like a door. I was so shocked, I didn't eat or sleep for almost two days. And I was not a religious person before discovering Buddhism.

"Then one day, Zarko invited me to attend a Dharma talk. This was how I first met Shifu. It was also the first Dharma talk in Croatia and a big success, attracting nearly 200 people who crowded into a small room to hear Shifu speak.

"In 1998, I went to New York to attend the 49-day Chan retreat led by Shifu at Dharma Drum Retreat Center. I took refuge with Shifu in 1999 (Zarko took refuge in 1996)."

Q: "Can you tell us how you have taught people in Croatia to understand Buddhism? Have you run into any difficulties?"

Zarko: "The center mainly runs two programs: Dharma learning and meditation practice. For Dharma learning, the center provides very basic instruction about the nature of Buddhism,

since people in Croatia still have very little information about it.

“As for meditation practice, the center provides at least one ten-hour practice on how to calm the mind. So, when one goes home, one knows how to practice alone. If one wants a deeper practice, one can join regular programs of one-day, three-day or seven-day retreats at the center.

“Honestly speaking, it was a big struggle to form a religious group in Croatia and for it to be approved by the authorities. However, it was a good sign when the new government showed a positive attitude in cooperating with the center for the legislative measures involving religious practice. We gave many suggestions to the authorities during the process, and they listened to our opinions.

“Just this year, for the first time I was invited to attend the 2007 roundtable meeting of interfaith talks as a representative of Buddhism, broadcast live on national television.”

Towards the end of the interview, Zarko explained that a large plot of land had been purchased on a hill outside Zagreb to build a well-equipped practice center accommodating more people. A translation team has been formed to translate more of Shifu’s English books into Croatian. And in 2008, Venerable Guo Jun, currently at Dharma Drum Retreat Center in New York, is expected to give a tour of Dharma Talks in the region.

Zarko’s center in Croatia is the Dharmaloka Buddhist Center, Dordiceva 23, in Zagreb. The center can be reached by telephone at 385 1 481 00 74, or by email at info@dharmaloka.org.

Taiwan DDM Welcomes Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism

Last May, a Buddhist delegation representing the Jogye Order of South Korea visited Dharma Drum Mountain in Taiwan. The delegation consisted of fifty-four Venerables representing fourteen Sangha universities in South Korea, and six Buddhists interested in education for the Sangha.

The Jogye Order is the preeminent school of Korean Buddhism, with roots that go back 1,200 years to Venerable Master Doui, who brought Seon to Korea around 820 C.E. as part of the legacy of the Sixth Chinese Patriarch, Venerable Master Huineng,

Master Sheng Yen, Abbot Ven. Guo Dong, and Deputy Abbot Ven. Guo Pin led the congregation of Dharma teachers to welcome the delegation at the bus depot.

The guests were invited to the Briefing Room at the DDM World Center where a film about Dharma Drum Mountain provided them with an introduction. Ven. Guo Pin went on to explain Dharma Drum Mountain’s three types of Education: Public Outreach, Caring Service and Academic Study, and concluded with an elucidation of the idea of the Spiritual Environment.

Korean Venerable Fa Cang (Chinese translation) extolled the merit of DDM’s efforts in Dharma propagation and Sangha education and expressed his group’s appreciation: “We are grateful for this extraordinary opportunity to meet and talk here about Sangha education. We wish to extend our warmest appreciation to Venerable Master Sheng Yen and all DDM Venerables, and to thank everyone.”

The fifty-four old monk then went to the Grand Buddha Hall to pay homage to Amitabha Buddha, Shakyamuni Buddha and Medicine Buddha. Following traditional Korean practice, they recited the Three Refuges and the Diamond Sutra for almost ten minutes in front of the Buddhas before offering a prayer for world peace.

Venerable Xing Hai then gave a summary of the history of his order. The Jogye Order has its roots in the teachings of Buddha Sakyamuni and its basic principles are the realization of Buddha nature and Dharma propagation. Its transmission lineage is Seon. The order relies on the Diamond Sutra as the guiding text, and although chanting and devotional practices are incorporated into their approach, the most important and widely known practice is *hvatou* meditation. This school of Korean Buddhism was officially established with three main goals: training and education, sutra translation into Korean from Chinese texts, and propagation of Buddha Dharma, and these remain the guiding aims of the Jogye Order to this day.

He explained that Sangha education in South Korea is made up of more than forty academic institutions and twenty Sangha universities, which can be divided into five categories: education for lay practitioners, for Bhikshus and Bhikshunis, for professionals (masters and doctoral degrees), for people engaged in culture and art, and education for Venerables discharging administrative duties. The four-year university course for the Sangha falls in the category of education for Bhikshus and Bhikshunis.

Venerable Hui Min of DDM observed that Sangha education in Taiwan and South Ko-

rea have a great deal in common. Until fairly recently, both the Taiwanese and Korean Governments had declined to grant academic accreditation to such institutions, but nowadays Sangha universities are allowed to award academic degrees in Buddhist studies. He also cited the example of Dharma Drum Buddhist College (DDBC), inaugurated last April, as the first religious college in Taiwan to offer post-graduate studies in Buddhism. The visiting delegates were impressed by his understanding of contemporary issues and their impact on religious education.

After an exchange of gifts, the visitors paid a visit to the Hall of Wish-Fulfilling Guanyin before bidding their hosts goodbye. All present shared the understanding that, despite the language barrier, the encounter was a milestone, fostering academic collegiality and exchange, and enhancing understanding between the Buddhist communities of both countries.

Precious Moments With Venerable Tenzin Palmo

On May 16, 2007, Guo Ming Fashi, abbot of the Chan Meditation Center, and resident nuns Guo Chian Fashi and Chang Wu Fashi were invited by the Global Peace Initiative of Women to attend a private reception for Venerable Tenzin Palmo in Manhattan.

There were about 30 people from different religions, ethnicities and walks of life at the reception. Upon request, Ven. Tenzin briefly talked about her life, practice, mission and the dream she wanted to accomplish. The Dongyu Gatsal Ling Nunnery, which she founded in India in 1999, currently has over twenty nuns



From left: Venerable Tenzin Palmo with Guo Ming Fashi, Chang Wu Fashi and Guo Chian Fashi.

who are learning to operate the nunnery in a democratic way. They plan to build a practice hall and extend housing to accommodate 50 nuns in the future.

Venerable Tenzin has been advocating equal opportunity for women to realize their intellectual and spiritual potential, and to eventually receive full ordination in the Tibetan tradition. She has admired the success that Buddhists in Taiwan, Korea and Vietnam have had in this regard. Buddhist nuns in some Taiwanese monasteries actually bear great responsibilities and play important roles. She gave Dharma Drum Mountain as an example.

Venerable Tenzin has visited Dharma Drum Mountain in Taiwan twice before, though this was the first time that we had met in the U.S. She made a proposal that we meet again in India next time. We cherish her commitment and compassion, and sincerely wish her success in every endeavor.

Buddhist Festival in Malaysia

In commemoration of the 50th anniversary of independence from Great Britain, some 50 Buddhist organizations of Malaysia joined to host a Buddhist Culture and Arts Festival at the beginning of June. The aim was to teach

the Malaysian public about Buddhism, and recognize the positive contributions of Buddhism in Malaysia toward humanity and world peace.

DDM Malaysia flung itself into the celebrations, setting up two stalls exhibiting books, videos and tapes with teachings by Master Sheng Yen and other works on Buddhism. A small Chan hall set up within the stall to allow people to experience Chan meditation was particularly well received, attracting lots of people.

On the last day of the festival, Sangha members presented the video “Odyssey & Renaissance” showing the history of the thousand-year-old Akshobya Buddha head; the ancient artifact had been returned by Master Sheng Yen to its place of origin, the Four Gates Pagoda in Shandong, China, fostering awareness of the need to protect our spiritual environment.

Overall, the festival was one of the biggest events for DDM Malaysia since its founding, and Sangha members are looking forward to future encounters with their neighbors in Malaysia.

(DDM Malaysia expressed special appreciation for the strong support they received from DDM Taiwan for this event).

Vesak in Bangkok

This year, to honor the King of Thailand’s eightieth birthday, the Thai Government combined the occasion with celebrations of Vesak in an expanded program from May 26th – 29th.

Guests from 61 countries gathered to hear speeches and attend seminars at the Buddhist City and the United Nations Asia Pacific Headquarters in Bangkok. They included Thailand’s Most Venerable Master Somdet Phra Buddyacharya, UN representatives and some 1,500 distinguished guests, including Buddhist masters, scholars, and diplomats.

DDM Abbot Ven. Guo Dong attended the festival on behalf of Master Sheng Yen, and presented the Master’s speech entitled “Buddhism Is the Hope for Promoting Lasting World Peace.”

The three-day festival saw delegates sharing ideas and experiences on topics such as Dharma propagation through modern technology, conservation and promotion of Buddhist art, Buddhist meditation and human development.

On the last day, Buddhist masters prayed for world peace in their own languages and signed the Bangkok Declaration at the UN Conference Hall.

Seattle DDM Summer Camp

“Moral Cultivation” was the theme for a three-day children’s summer camp hosted by DDM Seattle and led by four experienced instructors from Taiwan at the end of June.

With 26 children in attendance and the support of 20 community volunteers, the event started bright and early on the first day with a session of Eight Forms Moving Meditation. Both outdoor and indoor activities such as jumping rope, water Chan, and word games were all designed to raise children’s awareness of their natural surroundings and awak-

Photo: Jerry Roach



en a spirit of teamwork. Through the “Chan Life” program, children learned to cultivate concentration and to apply the Dharma in daily life.

In “Tea Chan” on the last day, the children learned the etiquette of serving tea to their parents with delicate concentration. At the end, everyone gathered to enjoy the slide show of all they had done together.

DDM Relief Teams Help with Highway Emergencies

Three people were killed and three others injured in Taiwan’s northern Keelung County on the morning of June 8 when mudslides caused

by days of heavy rains smothered roads and falling rocks smashed into vehicles and motorbikes on Keelung’s Maijin Highway.

Answering a call for help to DDM’s emergency relief center, coordinator Chiang Xiangmei provided immediate assistance, dispatching teams to the scene of the accident and the hospital.

In addition to aiding in the search for survivors and cleaning up the wreckage at the scene, team members met with bereaved families, providing moral support and spiritual counseling, joining with them in reciting Buddhist scriptures to bring peace to the departed.

On the evening of June 24 at 6:30 p.m, a tour bus carrying 35 passengers collided with a car and veered off a mountain road north of Taipei plunging down a deep ravine, killing at least eight people and injuring twenty-five others.

DDM Secretary General Guokaei Chen immediately summoned sixty DDM volunteers from Shihlin, Tienmu, Shihpai, Zhongshan, Tatung, Naihu, Danshui and Beitou districts to provide assistance.

Relief team members helped authorities to compile a list of the injured and the dead, double-checking with police at the scene to ensure accuracy, then helped guide relatives to the appropriate facilities. According to team coordinator Shen Wu, helping anxious relatives pinpoint the hospital where their loved ones were taken was initially the most urgent task.

By midnight the situation was under control and DDM volunteers chanted Sutras with the families, in a traditional service for the departed.

DDM Social Welfare and Charity Foundation also provided spiritual counseling and various other forms of assistance. Messages of condolence from Master Sheng Yen and the Venerable Guo Dong were passed on to the families, with blessings and solace to all involved.

Still Waters in Singapore

“Walking with a bowl full of water is my favorite form of Chan practice.” So reports one student from a group of 12 members of the Buddhist Society of Nanyang Technological

University invited by DDM Singapore last April to a one-day camp on Protecting the Spiritual Environment.

The event began with the screening of Master Sheng Yen’s Dharma talk on the meaning of Protecting the Spiritual Environment. Then, to break the ice, participants listened to relaxing music, and greeted each other joining palms, then gently pulling each other’s nose and ears. After that, each participant was given a bowl of water and had to walk around the parking lot without spilling a drop, while others were assigned to distract and provoke them, testing their concentration. Finally, an exercise in mindfully chewing raisins brought home the importance of living in the present moment.

As one student summed up, “When I was eating the raisins, I suddenly discovered how sweet they were, and decided that from now on, I would make a point of enjoying the taste of my meals.”

DDM Thailand Gives Scholarships

Last May, Venerable Guo Jian traveled to Chiang Rai in northern Thailand to award scholarships to fifty-six students from disadvantaged families of the Chinese minority in Chiang Rai City.

The region has more than 50 Chinese language schools, some located in remote and mountainous areas. Students from Chinese communities attend school for Thai education during the day, and Chinese language schools at night and on weekends.

DDM Thailand also made donations to Guanfu High School and Datong High Schools.

The Future

*Retreats, classes and
other upcoming events.*

At Dharma Drum Retreat Center in Pine Bush, NY

Phone: (845) 744-8114
E-mail: ddrc@dharmadrumretreat.org
Website: www.dharmadrumretreat.org

Chan Retreats

Intensive Chan retreats are opportunities for serious practitioners to deepen their practice and receive guidance from resident teachers. Introductory and other one- to seven-day retreats are scheduled throughout the year.

Schedule is subject to change. Please check the website below for updated information.

Ten-day Huatou Retreat

Friday, Nov 23, 5:00 pm –
Sunday, Dec 2, 10:00 am

Ten-day Silent Illumination Retreat

Wednesday, Dec 26, 5:00 pm –
Friday, Jan 4, 2008, 10:00 am

Beginner's Mind Retreat

Friday, Nov 9, evening –
Sunday, Nov 11, 5:00 pm

Three-, Five-, Seven-day Introductory Chan Retreats

Friday, Oct 5, 3:00 pm –
Thursday, Oct 11, 2:00 pm

Saturday, Dec 8, 3:00 pm –
Friday, Dec 14, 10:00 am

Regular Activity

Thursday Evening meditation, 7:00-9:00 pm

Classes at DDRC

Free Introduction to Meditation Workshop
Sunday, Nov 18, 2:00 – 5:00 pm

At Chan Meditation Center in Elmhurst, Queens, NY

Phone: (718) 592-6593
E-mail: ddmbaus@yahoo.com
Website: www.chancenter.org or
www.ddmba.org

Weekly Activities

Monday Night Chanting

7:00 – 9:15 pm Last Monday of the month:

Recitation of the Eighty-eight Buddhas' names and repentance

Last Monday of each month

Tuesday Night Sitting Group

7:00 – 9:45 pm: Sitting, yoga exercises,
walking meditation, Dharma discussions,
recitation of the Heart Sutra and social hour

Saturday Sitting Group

9:00 am – 3:00 pm: Sitting, yoga exercises,
walking meditation

Sunday Open House

10:00 - 11:00 am: meditation

11:00 am - 12:30 pm: Dharma lectures on Diamond or Platform Sutras

12:30 - 1:00 pm: lunch offerings

1:00 - 2:00 pm: lunch

2:00 - 3:00 pm: Q & A for English-speaking practitioners & chanting (the second Sunday of the month devoted to the chanting of The Great Compassion Dharani Sutra, 2:00 – 4:00)

Taijiquan with Instructor David Ngo

Thursdays, 7:30-9:00 pm, ongoing

\$25 per month, \$80 for 16 classes

First Thursday of the month is free for newcomers

Yoga with Instructor Rikki Asher

Saturdays, 3:00 – 4:30 pm

October 4, 11, 18, 25 and November 1, 8, 15

\$80 for 10 classes, \$10 per class. All levels are welcome.

Classes

Meditation Classes

Beginner and intermediate classes of two sessions each for a total of four sessions. Saturdays, 9:30 am – 12 noon.

Call or e-mail CMC for scheduled dates.

Pre-registration required

“Zen & Inner Peace”

Sunday, 7:00 a.m., WNYE (Channel 25)

Chan Master Sheng Yen's weekly television program.

Contact the Chan Meditation Center for more information.



Photo: Jerry Koach

Chan Center Affiliates

Local organizations affiliated with the Chan Meditation Center and the Dharma Drum Mountain Buddhist Association provide a way to practice with and to learn from other Chan practitioners. Affiliates also provide information about Chan Center schedules and activities, and Dharma Drum publications. If you have questions about Chan, about practice, or about intensive Chan retreats, you may find useful information at an affiliate near you.

NORTH AMERICA

USA

USA Headquarters

Dharma Drum Mountain Buddhist Association (DDMBA); Dharma Drum Publications; Chan Meditation Center: 90-56 Corona Avenue
Elmhurst, NY 11373
Tel: 718-592-6593
Fax: 718-592-0717
Email: ddmbaus@yahoo.com
<http://www.chancenter.org>

Dharma Drum Retreat Center
184 Quannacut Road
Pine Bush, NY 12566
Tel: 845-744-8114
Fax: 845-744-8483
Email: ddrcny@yahoo.com
<http://www.chancenter.org>

California

Los Angeles
Contact: Ashley Chiang
9674 Telstar Ave. #C
El Monte, CA 91731
Tel: 626-350-4388
Email: bluebean88@earthlink.net
<http://members.aol.com/ddmchan>

Riverside
Contact: Gilbert Gutierrez
Tel: 951-897-2286

Sacramento

Contact: Janice Tsai
9196 Campobello Court
Elk Grove, CA 95624
Email: ddmbasacara@yahoo.com
<http://sacramento.ddmba.org>

San Francisco

Contact: Hogan Chang
1153 Bordeaux Dr. #106
Sunnyvale, CA
Tel: 408-828-9218
Email: ddmbasf@yahoo.com

Connecticut

Contact: Alice Peng
Tel: 203-972-3406
Email: kontekalice@aol.com

District of Columbia

Washington D.C.
Tel: 301-982-2552
Email: chiehhsiungchang@yahoo.com

Florida

Gainesville
Tel: 352-336-5301
Email: lianflorida@hotmail.com

Miami

Contact: May Lee
Tel: 954-432-8683

Orlando

Tel: 407-963-0423
Email: solemil@bellsouth.net
<http://orlando.ddmba.org>

Tampa

Contact: Nancy Kau
Tel: 727-393-9588
Email: skau@tampabay.rr.com
<http://tampa.ddmba.org>

Georgia

Duluth:

Contact: Sophia Chen
4977 Dillard's Mill Way
Duluth, GA 30096
Tel: 770-416-0941
Fax: 770-417-5897
Email: sophialeee046@hotmail.com

Illinois

Belvedere

Contact: John Chen
1632 South State Street
Belvedere, IL 61008
Tel: 815-978-7159
Fax: 815-547-5550
Email: chen0981@yahoo.com

Chicago

Contact: Belinda Li
Tel: 773-907-9853
1234 N. River Road
Mt. Prospect, IL 60056
Email: Belindaliddmba@gmail.com
<http://www.ddmbachicago.org>

Indiana

Fort Wayne

Contact: Barry Wadsworth
8728 Sandpiper Ct.
Fort Wayne, IN 46804
Tel: 260-436-5124
Email: barry@chanpractice.org
<http://www.chanpractice.org>

Michigan

Contact: Li Hua Kong
1431 Stanlake Drive
E. Lansing, MI 48823
Tel/Fax: 517-332-0003
Email: lkong2006@gmail.com
<http://michigan.ddmba.org>

Missouri

Contact: Tai-Lin Lee
Tel: 636-529-0085
Email: acren@aol.com

New Hampshire

Tel: 603-276-9415
Email: ch_cherry@hotmail.com

New Jersey

Contact: Paul Lee
1 Ireland Brook Drive
N. Brunswick, NJ 08902
Tel/Fax: 732-398-1569
Email: runnshenglee@yahoo.com

Piscataway:

Contact: Maggie Laffey
Tel: 732-253-7248
Email: wreturns@optonline.net

New York

Long Island:

Contact: Hai Dee Lee
Email: Haideelee@yahoo.com

New York City

Contact: Chi-Liu Wu
90-56 Corona Ave.
Elmhurst, NY 11373
Tel: 718-592-6593
Fax: 718-592-0717
Email: ddmbaus@yahoo.com

Rochester:

Contact: Yi-Jen Chiu
413 University Park
Rochester, NY 14620
Email: yijen5395@gmail.com
<http://www.geocities.com/ddmbarochny>

Nevada

Las Vegas

Contact: Mabel Tan
Email: mebaltan@go.com

North Carolina

Tel: 919-852-4860
Email: tsuili2@yahoo.com

Ohio

Northeast Ohio:

Contact: Jeff Larko
755 Savannah Trail
Medina, OH 44256
Tel: 330-241-5321
Email: DDMBA_Ohio@yahoo.com

Oregon

Contact: Sabrina Huang
3300 SW 110th Ave.
Beaverton, OR 97005
Tel: 503-352-9214
Email: sabhuang@yahoo.com

Pennsylvania

State College

Tel: 814-867-9253
Email: ddmbapa@gmail.com
<http://ddmbapa.org>

Philadelphia

Tel: 610-254-5028
Email: tchiang2001@hotmail.com

Texas

Arlington:

Contact: Patty Yi
2150 East Pioneer Pkwy
Arlington, TX 76010
Tel: 817-274-2288
Fax: 817-274-7067
Email: ddmba_patty@yahoo.com

Austin

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Email: zenniewey@yahoo.com

Dallas

Contact: Patty Yee
Tel: 972-660-5971, 812-226-6888
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<http://dallas.ddmba.org>

Houston

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Memphis

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Canada

Toronto

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Canada M2L 2W3

Vancouver

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Zurich

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United Kingdom

London

18 Huson Close
London NW3 3JW, England
Tel: 44-171-586-6923

Western Ch'an Fellowship:

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Contact: Simon Child, secretary
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ASIA

Hong Kong

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Malaysia

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Information Centre in Malaysia:

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Selangor DE, Malaysia
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Singapore

Dharma Drum Mountain (Singapore Liaison Office):

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Singapore 266660
Contact: Ms. Yeh Yin Shia
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Email: ysyehsg@yahoo.com.tw

Taiwan

Nung Ch'an Monastery:

No. 89, Lane 65, Tayeh Road
Peitou, Taipei
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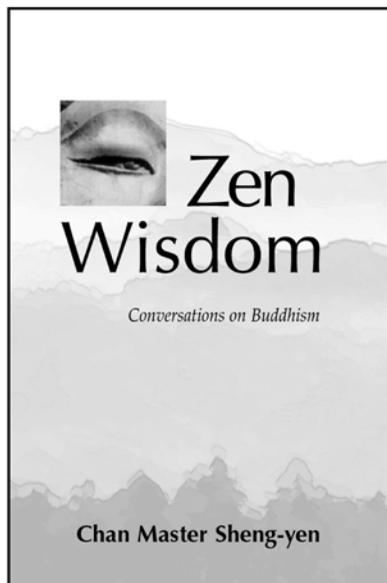
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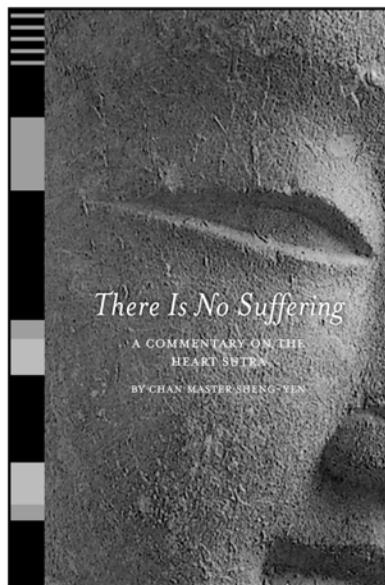


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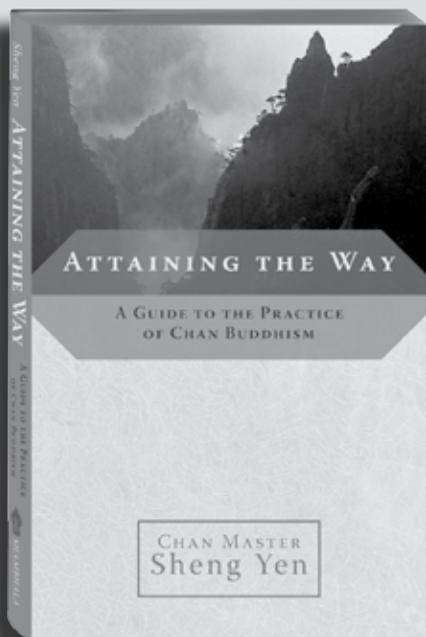
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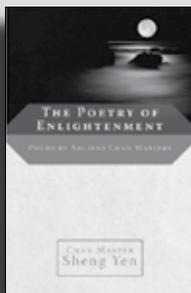


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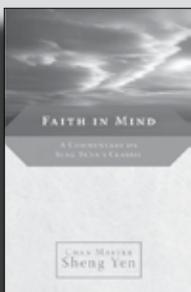
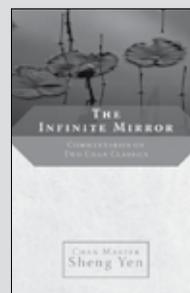
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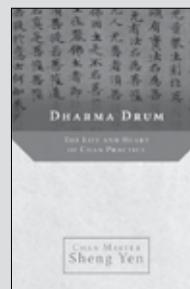
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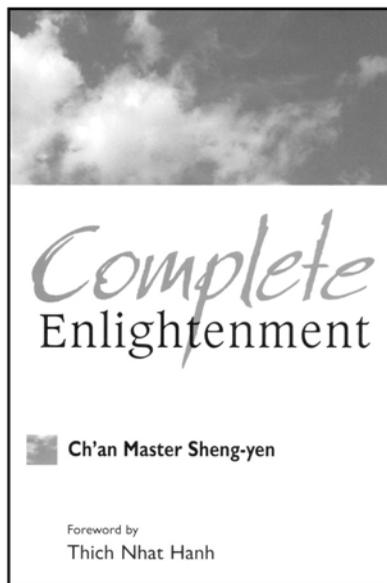
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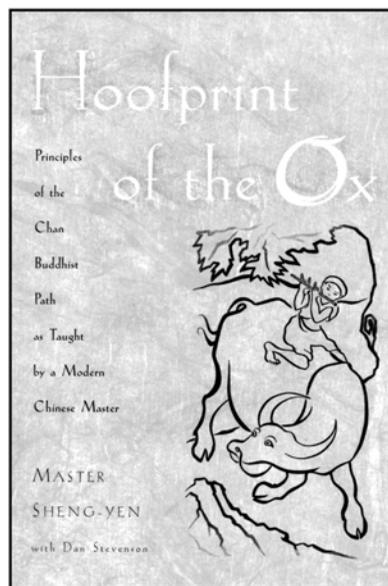
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