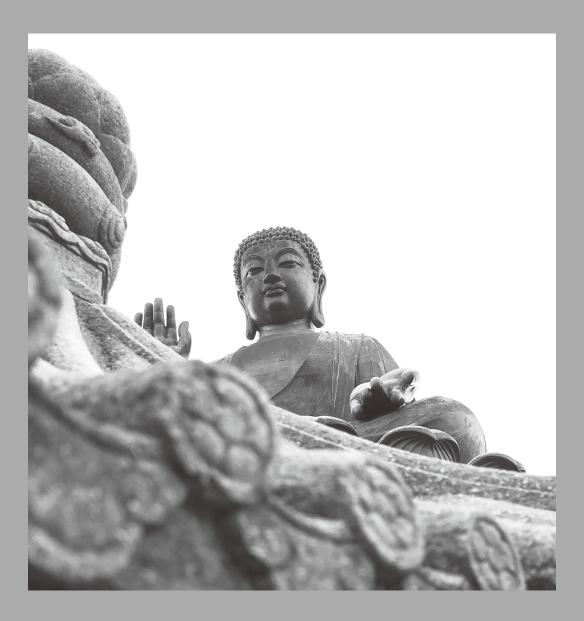


AUTUMN 2018





Dharma Seals

Oher can only achieve liberation through the three seals of dharma, which are: all formations are impermanent; all dharmas are without self; nirvana is quiescent. These seals are not only the means to liberation but liberation itself, which is the full-fledged realization of these three aspects of reality. Shakyamuni Buddha expounded guiding concepts and methods to attain the full realization of these three dharma seals, such as the four noble truths, the eightfold path and the thirty-seven aids to enlightenment. All of these flow out of the three dharma seals. They are of one taste because no matter what approach one takes, as long as the three principles are present, they all return to the taste of liberation.

フフ

CHAN MASTER SHENG YEN

"Free from Mind, Discrimination and Consciousness," Buddhadharma – The Practitioner's Quarterly, Fall 2003

### CHAN MAGAZINE

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY Institute of Chung-Hwa Buddhist Culture

Chan Meditation Center (CMC)

90-56 Corona Avenue

Elmhurst, NY 11373

FOUNDER/TEACHER Chan Master Venerable Dr. Sheng Yen

**ADMINISTRATOR** Venerable Chang Hwa

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Buffe Maggie Laffey

ART DIRECTOR Shaun Chung

coordinator Chang Jie

PHOTOGRAPHY AND ARTWORK Rikki Asher, Kaifen Hu, Taylor Mitchell

**COVER ART** Archive Photo

**CONTRIBUTING EDITORS** David Berman, Ernie Heau, Guo Gu

**CONTRIBUTORS** Venerable Chang Ji, Venerable Chang Zhai,

Rebecca Li, David Listen,

Ting-Hsin Wang, Bruce Rickenbacker,

Dharma Drum Mountain Cultural Center

**CHAN MEDITATION CENTER** (718) 592–6593 **DHARMA DRUM PUBLICATIONS** (718) 592–0915

chanmagazine@gmail.com

http://chancenter.org/cmc/publications/chan-magazines/

The magazine is a non-profit venture; it accepts no advertising and is supported solely by contributions from members of the Chan Center and the readership. Donations to support the magazine and other Chan Center activities may be sent to the above address and will be gratefully appreciated. Please make checks payable to Chan Meditation Center; your donation is tax-deductible.



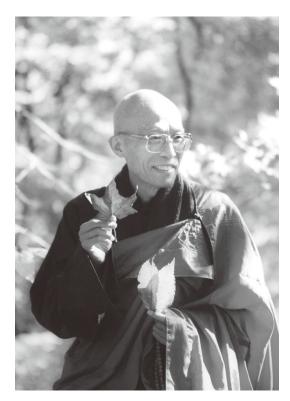
Volume 38, Number 4 — Autumn 2018

Impermanence and Non-Self By Chan Master Sheng Yen	4
Freedom Through Impermanence By Žarko Andričević	12
The Problem of Death By Chan Master Sheng Yen	20
On Death By Guo Gu	22
Bodhisattva Precepts: A Chan View	26
Bodhisattva Precepts Report  By lan Urquhart	29
Three Avatars By Ernest Heau	30
Chan Meditation Retreats	36
Chan Meditation Center Affiliates	38

Articles published in *Chan Magazine* contain the views of their authors and do not necessarily represent the views of Dharma Drum Mountain.



This article is taken from Master Sheng Yen's book, *The World of Chan*, originally published in Chinese as "禪的世界" (*chan de shujie*) in 1994. As a part of Master Sheng Yen's "Complete Works," it was translated under the auspices of the Cultural Center of Dharma Drum Mountain by Chiacheng Chang. Bilingual editing by Bob Dougherty; English editing by Ernest Heau.



# Impermanence Is Suffering

ACCORDING TO THE TEACHINGS OF the Buddha, suffering is the inevitable result of impermanence. Most people probably don't know where suffering comes from. Buddhism talks about "the four kinds of suffering" and "the eight kinds of suffering." The four kinds of suffering refer to birth, aging, sickness, and death. However, birth is not just a matter of being born; it includes existence, survival, and living

itself. For human beings suffering is a reality of the process of existing and living itself. Suffering also includes the process of changing from youth to old age, which we call "impermanence." Aging refers to the phenomenon of life passing one day at a time. Younger people probably won't feel that the process of life is painful. In fact, each day we live is a day of discomfort, passed in sickness. When young, human beings dread death. And the threat of death and the reality of death are the epitome of suffering. The four kinds of suffering – birth, aging, sickness, and death – comprise the first of the four noble truths about human life realized by Shakyamuni Buddha.

In addition to the four kinds of suffering mentioned above, there are four additional kinds of suffering: separation from loved ones; not getting what we desire; encountering enemies; and the flourishing of the five skandhas (form, sensation, perception, volition and consciousness). Collectively, these are the eight kinds of suffering, which are all due to impermanence. We suffer because what we seek, our own self, external conditions - all are in constant flux. So what we want we can't get: yesterday he loved you, today someone has stolen your beloved. When causes and conditions change, that's impermanence. When you have what you desire, causes and conditions will change, and your "bird in hand" may fly away. Impermanence means continuous, transitory change, and thus we have the suffering of not getting and not keeping what we desire.

for our enemies is the result of karmic affinities with them. If there were no mutual relationship since time without beginning, then there would be no reason for antagonism to arise. The reason for deep antagonisms is mutual affinities. Deeper relationships breed deeper antagonisms. For example, the relationship between husband and wife is portrayed in the Chinese saying: "Enemies and lovers are destined to meet." "Enemies" implies that conditions have changed. Changes in circumstances, ideas, and the environment turn two people formerly in love into enemies. Nobody likes to see love turn into hate, but due to conflicts with our own interests and the influence of changes in the environment, people may become enemies. But even as enemies, it's difficult for the two parties to be free of each other. On the contrary, they're often thrown together. This is the suffering of associating with what one dislikes.

The suffering of separation from loved ones is also a form of impermanence. This is easy to understand. Where there is parental love, the teacher's love for their students, the love between husband and wife, between friends, between people who share a close relationship, then, when circumstances and causes and conditions change, the parties often must part. This is also impermanence.

The suffering of the flourishing of the five skandhas is the result of disharmony between the four major elements of the body, contradictions within the mind, and loss of control of the mind. The four major elements (earth, air, fire, water) refer to a physical body not in harmony. Because changes to the physical body are uncontrollable and unpredictable, the body experiences the suffering of illness. Our own thoughts are also in conflict, both internally and with phenomena. While our thoughts are changing, so is the external environment, and we cannot adapt. We torment ourselves; our previous thoughts are at odds with subsequent thoughts. Yesterday's thoughts

are inconsistent with today's. We're conflicted because we can't have our cake and eat it too. There's a disconnect between ideals and reality, an imbalance between the material and the spiritual. We thus create negative karma and receive retribution life after life, and the five skandhas continue to flourish.

### Letting Go of the Impermanent

If we can awaken to the impermanence of all phenomena, we will immediately attain liberation. Not being aware of impermanence and



wever, birth is not just a matter of ncludes existence, survival, and living form of impermanence? It is. Much of our antagonism

Chan Master Sheng Yen Photo by Edward Peters

AUTUMN 2018

misunderstanding it, we are submerged in the sea of suffering. If we have observed and realized that all phenomena in the world are impermanent, we can be a bit more detached and unruffled by things, and have fewer things that we can't let go of. Even "I," "you," and "they" are all impermanent. Realizing they are impermanent, we will immediately have a totally transformed view of our values and our judgments of other people.

When an American lottery winner was interviewed about what he would do with the money, he cried: "Oh, no! I don't know what to do, I'm so happy! But I don't know what to do. Now I have so much money, what should I do in the future? From tonight on I won't dare go to sleep. I don't know what to do." If he had known about impermanence, things would have been easier. Since he had won the lottery, he could just spend it slowly and eventually it would be gone. Or, he might lose it by accident; or the money might disappear through deceit or robbery. And then it would be gone. Or, he might invest it and make more money. But when he dies he would even have to let go of his body, as well as the money, which he wouldn't be able to take with him. What is there to worry about? Since phenomena are impermanent, there is no need to feel happy when good things happen. By the same token, if bad things happen, we know that they are impermanent, and so there is no need to feel distress either. Very soon, bad luck will be gone, as it is also impermanent. When the undesirable is gone the fortunate will come, and thus open up brand new prospects.

### Impermanence Is Emptiness

By understanding impermanence, we realize the principle of emptiness. Emptiness does not mean non-existence in the sense that there is nothing at all. Instead, it means that phenomena don't last; they are

insubstantial, illusive and uncertain, and constantly changing. That's why it is called emptiness, and emptiness is itself the unchanging truth.

Impermanence is suffering, impermanence is emptiness, and impermanence is non-self. This is the fundamental doctrine of Buddhadharma. One who can accept the doctrines of suffering, impermanence, and non-self, is a Buddhist with right faith.

A man once heard me explaining the four noble truths, as well as suffering, emptiness, impermanence, and non-self, and later he said to me, "Venerable, you can't talk about this anymore. If you do, our world will be finished. How negative! How pessimistic! There's no hope at all." Are you feeling the same way, and would you react the same way? In fact, we hardly ever realize that there is such a thing as suffering in our daily life. We may have heard of the term "impermanence," but it's actually impossible for us to experience impermanence. We may talk about emptiness, but we will not likely feel emptiness. We may be talking about non-self, but it's impossible not to have a self. Even I have a self, otherwise who would be here giving this speech? But this is the principle and ultimate theory of Buddhadharma, and it takes expedient means to apply it in our daily life. To learn and practice the Buddhadharma is called the cultivation of the path, for which the four noble truths is a most basic entry method.

### The Four Noble Truths

The four noble truths are the earliest teaching of Shakyamuni Buddha, delivered to his five bhikshus disciples at Deer Park; this event has come to be known as the three turnings of the wheel of dharma. There, three times the Buddha explained the essential idea of Buddhadharma as the four truths of suffering, accumulation, cessation, and the Path. For each turning of the wheel, he explained the noble truths

at a higher level, as the origin and accumulation of suffering to its cessation. The first level is to expound the principles of suffering, accumulation, cessation, and the Path. The second level is to acknowledge the truths of suffering, accumulation, cessation, and the path. The third level is to cultivate the path, eliminate suffering, and put a stop to accumulation. At the third level, one will have attained the fruit of arhatship and is therefore liberated.

The first turn of the wheel was to illustrate the truth that life is about experiencing suffering while accumulating suffering, and the process goes on in cycles without stopping, so people continuously transmigrate in samsara. The second turn of the wheel illustrates that after realizing what suffering and accumulation mean, one should then practice the eightfold noble path, and that only by cultivating the path can one put an end to accumulation and eliminate suffering.

### The Eightfold Noble Path

If we hope to attain liberation, then we have to cultivate the path. Without cultivating the eightfold noble path, we won't be able to attain liberation; by cultivating the eightfold noble path, we can sever the causes that lead to offenses and accumulating suffering, thus achieving the goal of eliminating suffering and attaining the path or enlightenment.

The eightfold noble path comprises right view,



right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. Some items of the Eightfold Noble Path may be referred to differently in different sutras, but right view, right mindfulness, right concentration, right thought, right speech, and right livelihood always appear. Collectively, they are actually the three learnings without outflow - precepts, concentration, and wisdom. "Without outflows" means without leaks. Why is that? When you are not asking for rewards, there will only be what you have put in, but nothing taken out. So there will only be increases and no decreases, which is called "without outflow." If you put in something first and then take it out, that constitutes "with outflow." As long as we are practicing a Dharma method with a selfless mind, seeking nothing, it can also be referred to as a study or practice without outflow.

If we cultivate the path, we can become enlightened. Enlightened to what? To the realization that impermanence is non-self.  $\infty$ 

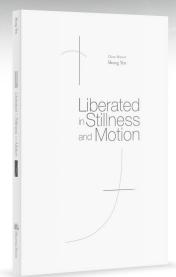
ulpture by Mario Irarrázab Photo by Roi Dim

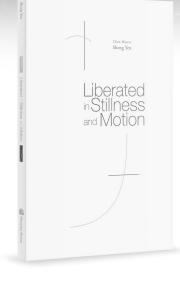
### Liberated in Stillness and Motion

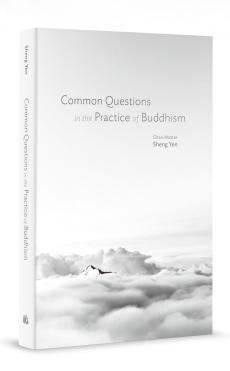
### Chan Master Sheng Yen

"Correct Chan does not use miracles or the summoning of spirits as its appeal, nor does it emphasize other-worldly phenomena. Chan takes simple normal living as its basis, lessening afflictions as its purpose, being relaxed and at ease. One does not regret the past; rather, one actively prepares for the future, moving steadily ahead while being fully in the present. Although I introduce Chan in contemporary language and words, my perspective does not deviate from the teachings of the Buddha and the lineage masters. I avoid the 'wild-fox Chan' of some who talk of going beyond the Buddha and the lineage masters, who say outrageous things, scolding as if they were ancient buddhas from the past."

Dharma Drum Publishing • ISBN 978-957-598-7-8-4







# **Common Questions** in the Practice of Buddhism

# Chan Master Sheng Yen

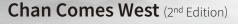
If someone believes in and practices Buddhism, should they also take refuge in the Three Jewels?

Is special knowledge and advanced learning required to practice Buddhism?

Are there any taboos concerning practicing Buddhism at home?

In Common Questions in the Practice of Buddhism, Chan Master Sheng Yen addresses these and many other spiritual and worldly problems in a simple question-and-answer format. He clarifies common areas of confusion about Buddhist beliefs and practices and gives practical advice on leading a life that is "full of wisdom, kindness, radiance, comfort, freshness, and coolness" in the contemporary world.

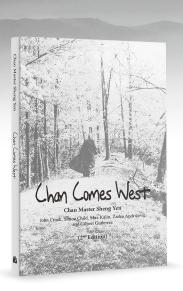
Sheng Yen Education Foundation • ISBN 978-986-6443-92-3



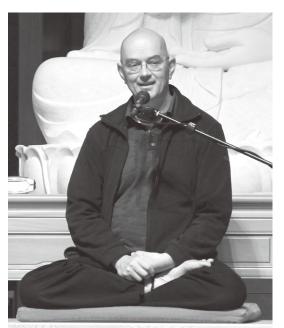
Chan Master Sheng Yen John Crook, Simon Child, Max Kälin, Žarko Andričević, and Gilbert Gutierrez

In this book Chan Master Sheng Yen shares his experience in the practice and his views on Dharma transmission. His five lay Dharma heirs share their stories on the path, including how they came to the practice, their inner struggles along the path, and what receiving Dharma transmission has meant for them. The Master has sown the Dharma seeds, and it is now the task of these Dharma heirs to cultivate the field so that Chan will flourish in the West and benefit people for generations to come. It is hoped that readers will find these stories inspiring and be encouraged to make great vows in their practice.

Dharma Drum Publications • ISBN 1-890684-04-x



# Freedom Through Impermanence Žarko Andričević Photo by Charles Hsu



Zarko, a Dharma heir of Chan Master Sheng Yen, is the founder of the Buddhist Center in Zagreb, Croatia. A martial arts and yoga teacher since the 1970s, Žarko first encountered Buddhism in 1975. In 1985 he started the first Buddhist study and meditation group in Croatia which in time grew into the first Buddhist community there, known today as Dharmaloka. This article is taken from a Dharma talk given at a retreat at the Dharma Drum Retreat Center in June 2018.

THE CONCEPTS OF BUDDHADHARMA are a very important part of our practice. It is necessary to understand that right views are one part and methods are the other part; the two must go together. If we only practice our meditation methods but are not familiar with Buddhist concepts and right views, we may derive some benefit but it won't be the true Buddhadharma, and it won't be true Chan.

On the other hand if we only study Buddhadharma and Chan, becoming very familiar with Buddhist philosophy without using any methods, it is like counting other people's treasure. This knowledge won't really be ours. Without actual experience gained through the methods, this knowledge will always remain merely knowledge. It will not be transformed into wisdom. Only through practice and personal experience can we transform knowledge into wisdom, which is then our own. For this reason, the right views of the Buddhadharma on the one hand and the methods of the Buddhadharma on the other, must go together.

As Master Sheng Yen once said, it is like traveling and having a map. If you just travel without really knowing where you're at and where you want to go, it can take you anywhere. But if we have a map, if we know exactly where we are and what our destination is, then there is a certainty we will arrive there. The right views are really like signposts giving us direction in our practice. By using them, we can clear all eventual misunderstandings and obstacles in the course of our practice. For this reason they are very useful, and we must integrate them into our practice. They have to be somewhere at the back when we are using the method. That doesn't mean that as we are actually using the method we will think about and analyze right views. It means that this knowledge is so complete that it is the background of our practice, guiding us without any necessity of bringing the concepts forward to think about.

### The Dharma Seals

So what are these right views? Well, the four inverted views, or upside down views, show how we are deluded about the reality in which we live: In what is impure, we see purity; in what is suffering we see happiness; in what is not self we see self; and

in what is impermanent we see permanence. This is completely opposite from the nature of reality in which we actually live, whereas the *right* views describe the nature of reality.

There is another teaching in Buddhism, almost the same thing, called the three Dharma seals, which are actually a description of the nature of reality. The Dharma seals are: all phenomena are impermanent, all phenomena are selfless, and *nirvana* is a final peace. Sometimes you find in the literature a fourth seal which is: all impermanent things lead to suffering. But in Mahayana this is not really understood as a seal, because it is not universal. There is of course suffering, but we can be without suffering as well. So usually in the Mahayana schools there are these three seals.

If any teaching has impermanence as a principal, selflessness as a principal, and nirvana as a goal, we can say that it is Buddhadharma.

22

So, all phenomena are impermanent; all phenomena are selfless; and nirvana is a final peace. These are the three Dharma seals. Why are they called seals? Because they prove that something is authentic Buddhadharma. If any teaching has impermanence as a principal, selflessness as a principal, and nirvana as a goal, we can say that it is Buddhadharma. This is beneficial because sometimes we hear some kind of teaching but we don't know where that teaching is coming from. Some teachings use the Buddha's terminology and are presented in a way almost as if it is Buddhism. But if we know the Dharma seals,

then we can check whether this teaching is really in accordance with Buddhadharma or not.

The first Dharma seal is: all phenomena are impermanent. "All phenomena" means all phenomena of the mind, all physical phenomena, all phenomena of our body and all phenomena in our environment. Actually it includes everything. This first Dharma seal is telling us that all these phenomena are impermanent. From the smallest thing in the universe, from the atom or even the parts of the atom, up to the biggest celestial bodies in the universe, they are all impermanent. They are all in the process of arising and ceasing. You can't find any phenomenon which is actually not impermanent – there is no such thing; all phenomena are impermanent.

### **Avoiding Impermanence**

Impermanence is usually something we don't like to think about. It's scary somehow; we are getting older and we can see that. Of course as we are getting older we are getting closer to our death. Impermanence is always reminding us of death, and that is terrifying from the perspective of ego, it's definitely not good news. We would of course like to always remain young and beautiful and healthy, and live forever. But that's completely opposite to the nature of reality. For that reason we don't like to think about impermanence; we actually avoid the idea in all possible ways.

That doesn't mean that we are not aware of it. Of course we know that days are going by and the seasons are changing and one year is passing after another. We know intellectually that impermanence is there. We know that our bodies are changing, that our personalities are changing as well. We know, but somehow we don't believe in it. We don't accept it. It seems that that there is something there which is not changing. After all, this is "me." I know myself.

Ten years ago, and fifteen years ago, all the time this is "me". This creates an illusion that we are not changing. Also when you look every day at yourself in the mirror, you don't really see the change. With photography it's a different story - when you look at your photos from a year ago or three years ago, you see, wow, things are changing! We could say that bodies change so slowly that it leaves the impression of permanence. On the other hand we could say that the mind is changing so fast that again it leaves the impression that it doesn't change. But actually our bodies and personalities are changing all the time, as well as our environment. Everything is changing all the time.



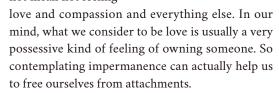
I remember one evening talk by Master Sheng Yen [Shifu], on a retreat here in this place. It was soon after this place was completed, the construction was finished, we were using this Chan Hall and everything was new and beautiful. Shifu said, "This place was already once in ruin and then we brought it to this present condition, and in the future it will go again into ruin." And he said, "I am now teaching here, but in the future I will be gone too." You know, it seems to us that things are just as they are. We take them for granted; we have this whole center, we have teachers talking about the Dharma. It seems that everything is somehow fixed and stable and it won't change. When Shifu said what he did, some people felt he was exaggerating a little bit. But you know, things are changing, and that is very important to realize.

### Facing Impermanence

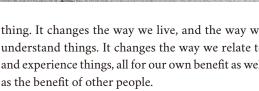
From the one side impermanence is something which is terrifying – we don't like to think about it, we avoid it in all possible ways. But if we have

> enough courage to face impermanence, we can actually start to experience the enormous benefits it can bring to us. The first positive effect impermanence has in our life is that it makes us think: What's the purpose of life? Why am I here in the first place? If everything is impermanent, what is the meaning of all of this? That is the first positive effect that impermanence can have on us. We begin to search for the meaning, for the path, and that's very, very important.

After we start to contemplate and become familiar with impermanence, the second positive effect is in lessening our attachment to things. There is no real need to be attached to things which are impermanent. When we can clearly see that being attached to something impermanent only brings suffering, our attachment lessens. By being attached to something, we can't make the thing last longer or last forever, and it can't make us happy. If it is another person, we can't make another person happy by being attached to that person. So what attachment does to us becomes very clear. But, not being attached does not mean not being in a relationship. It does not mean not being responsible. It does not mean not feeling



The more we contemplate impermanence, the freer and happier we are. Which seems contradictory from what we mentioned in the beginning, that first of all it's terrifying. We run away from impermanence, but if we turn ourselves towards it, if we face and contemplate impermanence, we can gain an enormous amount of benefit. We start to appreciate every single thing which is a part of our experience. Especially the so-called ordinary, unimportant things, suddenly gain completely new meaning. Our life does not consist of big things - we might have big plans, big goals and so on, but our life from moment to moment consists of very small, ordinary, everyday things. If we don't appreciate those small things, if we don't see their uniqueness and their impermanent nature, then we won't be able to live harmoniously and happily. For this reason, contemplating impermanence is a very important thing. It changes the way we live, and the way we understand things. It changes the way we relate to and experience things, all for our own benefit as well as the benefit of other people.



### The Most Important Teaching

Impermanence is probably the most important teaching of the Buddha. All other teachings are teaching about permanence. For example, in Hinduism there is an idea that this world is *maya*, which is Sanskrit for illusion, or illusory world. They teach that to be attached to this illusory world only brings suffering. So they were looking for something permanent behind this illusory world. They found it in meditation, in the state of samadhi where the atman, the individual self, joins with brahman, or universal self, and that was a solution for them. But then the problem remains of all this diversity which is still illusory, in relation to that one thing which is permanent. It's a difficult philosophical situation because this duality is not overcome, is not really solved.

CHAN MAGAZINE AUTUMN 2018

This is a Hindu teaching and the Buddha, at the beginning, was practicing the methods of meditation and the paths which existed at the time he was alive in India. He experienced this unity of atman and brahman, and he wasn't satisfied with that. For the time in which you are in samadhi, in which you are one, things are fine and everything is okay. But when you get out of it, things go back to where they were before. Not entirely of course, but suffering is still there because attachment is still there, because self is still there. So instead of looking for permanence, the Buddha turned to everyday, moment to moment experience. Actually he started to contemplate impermanence. And he found freedom through impermanence, not through something which is eternal, unchanging, and permanent.

The Buddha turned himself and faced impermanence, something everybody was running away from. Everybody was looking for a constancy - something permanent and fixed. They saw the permanent, fixed reality hidden behind this illusory reality which we are aware of in our everyday life. But is this reality one, or are there many realities? In Buddhism, in the *Heart Sutra* there is this line: "form is emptiness, emptiness is form; form is precisely emptiness, and emptiness is precisely form." There is no second reality. This very form IS emptiness, and emptiness IS form. There are not two realities; there is one reality. Therefore there is no conflict between the appearances and the truth about the appearances. Between the phenomena and the truth about these phenomena. Okay? In Buddhism, they are one.

So, all phenomena are impermanent; that was the first Dharma seal. I hope you can see in what way it is beneficial to contemplate impermanence, and how important this Buddhist teaching is. Because out of impermanence comes these other teachings about no self and about emptiness. It's a logical progression. The deeper insight tells us that actually, because all

phenomena are impermanent, they are selfless. There is no core, there is no self, in ANY phenomena.

If we go further than that, we actually find out that all phenomena are empty as well. There is a lot of confusion about that. When we say phenomena are empty, people wonder, what does it mean? Everything is emptiness, phenomena are empty, it means they don't exist? Is it nonexistence? Nothingness? It seems like some kind of nihilistic view. Actually "phenomena are empty" means that every phenomenon is empty of independent existence. Every phenomenon is empty – empty of what? Always ask: empty of what? Of being independent, of existing separately from other phenomena. This is the truth and the meaning of emptiness - that in a positive way we can say that everything is interconnected. All phenomena are interconnected; they don't exist separately. That insight into emptiness, and also into no self, is what uproots the ignorance in ourselves. Because ignorance is understood as a belief in having a separate self, having a separate existence.

### **Emptiness is Nirvana**

The experience of emptiness is what nirvana is. When you have a complete experience of emptiness you are experiencing nirvana. We can interpret these three teachings as layers of the true nature of reality. At the first layer we contact impermanence; usually we run away from it so we never go deeper into it. But if we contemplate impermanence we can touch this deeper truth of selflessness. If we contemplate selflessness and develop insight into it, we touch the even deeper truth of emptiness, of interconnectedness. In every one of these layers, our freedom becomes deeper and deeper. Every one of these layers is liberating us from our misconceptions, from our misunderstanding and ignorance, and making us more free. So these are the Dharma seals.

There is one part of a famous poem which says:

All phenomena are impermanent, they are all subject to arising and ceasing. Whatever arises has to cease. When arising and ceasing stop, that is the bliss of nirvana.

There is a story connected with these famous lines; it is about Buddha in one of his previous lives as an ascetic practitioner in the Himalayas. The god Indra was aware of Buddha being really serious in his practice, and wanted to test him. So he made Buddha hear this first line "all phenomena are impermanent, they are all subject to arising and ceasing," and then Indra stopped there. Buddha heard this teaching and he wanted to learn more about it. Then Indra appeared in front of the Buddha as a *rakshasha*, a monster. Buddha realized that it was this rakshasha who'd said the lines he'd heard, and he asked him to say the rest of the teaching. The rakshasha said "Well, I can tell you, but I'm terribly hungry and I feed myself with human flesh. So what deal can we make?"

The Buddha said, "I have to know the other part of this teaching. This is the most important thing, this is why I am practicing. I have to know, so what can I do?"

The rakshasha said "Well, if I eat you, how can you hear my teaching? And if I'm telling you the teaching, I'm not eating you – then you have a benefit but I don't have any benefit. So what deal we can make?

They finally came to an agreement. The rakshasha was a huge monster with a huge mouth and he said to Buddha "You climb up on that rock. I will open my mouth and when you jump in the air I will tell the other line of the teaching, so you will hear it before you fall into my mouth" and the Buddha agreed. He climbed up the rock and made ready to jump, and as he jumped the rakshasha spoke the other line "when

arising and ceasing ceases, that is the bliss of nirvana." At that moment when the Buddha jumped into the mouth of the rakshasha, the rakshasha suddenly turned into Indra and caught Buddha in his arms. That's a beautiful story. It is telling us how serious the practitioner has to be in relation to the Dharma: wanting to hear, wanting to know, wanting to learn, wanting to practice.

We can use this first Dharma seal in our practice now by simply looking at everything which appears in the light of impermanence. Whatever appears, just be aware that it is impermanent. Pain in the knees can be impermanence. Wandering thoughts, impermanence. Everything, whatever you are experiencing, try to look at it in the light of impermanence, and practice with this strong idea in the background that everything there is, is impermanent. You will see how helpful that can be. We struggle with our pain *precisely* because we see pain as permanent. Whenever we are stuck on something, we are stuck because we see that thing as permanent. Seeing everything in the light of impermanence, is freeing ourselves. Therefore it is very beneficial and very helpful in our practice.



# The Problem of Death

BY

# Chan Master Sheng Yen

This article is taken from a talk given by Master Sheng Yen on June 29, 1980, during a Chan retreat. It originally appeared in the *Chan Newsletter* – No. 11, February 1981.

In the past the greatest problem that Chan masters encountered with their disciples was getting them to have an earnest attitude toward the fact of death. Without a deep sensitivity to the problem of death, it's very hard to get into the practice of Chan. It is very difficult for people who are young, or who live in a very "safe" or sheltered environment, to get a feel for death. I don't know whether any of you ever think about this business of death, and possibly, even if you do, you don't feel it is all that serious and that it really doesn't concern you right now. I wonder how sensitive you are to the fact that you are going to die, that life is impermanent.

Probably most young people can't really bring themselves to be moved by the fact of death. Of the people who are moved by the fact of death, there are two kinds of attitudes. Most commonly it is a kind of fear of death, that is, they don't know how soon they are going to die, and they don't want to die. They may want to hold on to the good things in this life or possibly something they can leave behind which they will be admired for in the future. There is a great deal of self-attachment in this attitude.

The other type of attitude is held by people who are practicing. When they are practicing well, the fear of death is absent. They are consciously aware that they are going to die and death may come at any time, and they don't want to die leaving anything undone. This means they want to take advantage of all their time to practice hard. Since they still have not attained liberation, they don't know where they're going after death. But they know they are in contact with the Buddhadharma now, so they should make good use of the present life to practice as much as they can. Of course, there is self-attachment involved here also. But this is necessary. If there were no self-attachment, you would not have the original thought to practice. It was in order to solve your own problems that you first began practicing.

The most important point that the great masters in the past have made with regard to death is: when you are actually practicing, you should not be afraid of your body dying, or of losing something. In the past, when people left the home life, they made a kind of mental preparation that they were handing their body over to the monastery, and handing their



The Great Death

Calligraphy by Chan Master Sheng Yen

life over to the spiritual beings who protect the Buddhadharma. Whatever the monastery or Dharma protectors instruct them to do, they will do. They are just going to practice, disregarding their body and life.

As to the practitioner who does not think about death or care about it one way or another because it doesn't affect him anyway, and thus is not afraid of death – this is also a good attitude. One can practice well with it. People who are constantly worrying about their body during meditation (e.g. "I feel a little pain here, a little discomfort there, if I keep on going, maybe something will happen to me.") will never practice well. Not only should you not worry about your body dying, but you should not worry about your spirit dying. If there's any kind of "spirit" left that could become a Buddha, then it's definitely not the real thing. It's just a demon or a ghost! If there is anything left there, no matter if it is a "false" or "wandering" mind, or a so-called "true" or "correct" mind, it has to die, or else it's just a ghost. So what do you want to do – become a Buddha, or become a ghost?

Once in China there was a monk who practiced so well he was able to leave his body and travel around. One time he left his body for a week. Everyone took a look at him for that one week sitting there and assumed he had died, so they cremated his body. At the end of the week, he came back to the same place and couldn't find his body. So he hovered up in the sky, yelling out, "Where am I? Where am I?" Everyone in the monastery was frightened about this because for several

days straight he was shouting "Where am I?"

After he was shouting for a few days, the abbot decided to get rid of him in a certain way. He put a big tub of water right under where the sound was coming from, and the next time they heard the voice crying, "Where am I?" the abbot yelled up, "You're down here!" Upon hearing that, the spirit descended with a splash. Then the abbot called out to him: "You're already dead! After all, all you did was turn yourself into a ghost. Pitiable ghost! Did you really get liberated? Don't you know that neither the five skandhas nor the four elements that compose the body are you? Where are you?"

Then this monk realized that his physical body was not the same as himself, and the death of the physical body was not an important issue. If he was still to think that the water was actually himself, he would have transformed from a ghost to a water spirit.

So if I put this glass of water here right now, and if someone were to ask, "Where am I?" and I were to say, "You are here" (pointing to the water), would any of you get enlightened?  $\sim$ 

# On Death

BY

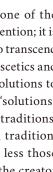
### Guo Gu

uo Gu first learned meditation in 1972 when he was four years old, Ustudying with a respected Chinese meditation master in Taiwan, Master Guanggin (1892–1986). In 1980, he began learning meditation from Master Sheng Yen, who was residing in New York at the time. In 1991, after college, Guo Gu was ordained as a monk and became Master Sheng Yen's personal attendant. In 1995, he had his first Chan experience, and was given permission by the master to teach Chan independently. In 2000, Guo Gu left monasticism and re-entered the world. He received his PhD in Buddhist Studies from Princeton University in 2008 and began teaching Buddhism and East Asian religions as an Assistant Professor at Florida State University. In 2009, he founded the Tallahassee Chan Center, where has begun to build a Dharma community of senior practitioners living together.



"DEATH" HAS PRODUCED A PROFUSION of ideas, tied to our existential fear. Since the beginning of human civilization, the awareness of what seems to be death, our eventual end, has propelled us to seek ways of transcending it. We have developed strategies, solutions, philosophies, religions, spiritual ways, up to the present time, as a result. Modern day pop culture is also in on it. Recently I saw a commercial, about a cosmetic product called "age curing" crème. It makes wrinkles from aging sound like a disease, something we must cure! Why? Because it's a sign of death, a sign of deterioration, which is something we have to mask, conceal.

Since time immemorial, death is one of the motivating forces that drives human invention; it is also something that humans have tried to transcend or master. At the Buddha's time, many ascetics and philosophers came up with different solutions to death. And we can see these similar "solutions" in many world religions and spiritual traditions. One common one is the Brahmanical tradition. According to Brahmanism, everyone, less those in the lowest caste, has the essence of the creator god, Brahma. What connects them to Brahma is their own essence called atman, the self. So, when people engage in spiritual practice, through the





mediation of their priests, they are able to return to Brahma, who abides outside of the cyclic existence of rebirth. Other counter-Brahmanical tradition practitioners cultivated their minds in meditation, relying on their own efforts, to enter into states of deep meditative absorption to avoid death.

In Daoism, the realization of transcendence is what is called *xian*, in essence, divinity. Early Western scholars translate that as "immortality" because we in the West have a corresponding notion. But Daoist transcendence is a little bit different - it is to live as long as heaven and earth, which is a long time. This is the aim of both philosophical or religious Daoism. For the sake of brevity, philosophical Daoism refers to the eremitic tradition of self-cultivation; religious Daoism refers to lineages of ritual practice.

Around the time of the Buddha, we have evidence of ancient Chinese manuscripts talking about self-cultivation techniques, backed up with

its own philosophy that everything – from minerals and metals, to nature and human beings – is made out of qi, or energy. From the transformations of qi, forms manifest and change. The way of selfcultivation is, through diet, bodily yogic exercises, and meditative techniques, to transform and become the purist form of qi, ethereal and transcendent – to become a xian or divinity.

There are signs of mastery of death. In Christianity, you have the incorruptible body of saints, where the body, after having died, exudes a fragrance or does not decay. This is something that we can see in different cultures, such as those desert ascetics, both monks and nuns, that the eminent scholar of late antiquity Christianity (fourth to fifth centuries), Caroline Bynum, has studied. In China, many masters have died sitting upright in the meditation posture, and their bodies do not decay. We humans see these things as indications of mastery of death.

CHAN MAGAZINE AUTUMN 2018 23 Science and modern technology also try to cure or at least slow down death. Think of plastic surgery, modern medicine, or the practice of freezing the corpse.

What I want to talk about is not technology, premodern or modern. What I want to talk about is our fear, and the stories we build around it, from the Chan perspective. When Chan Master Dahui Zonggao (1089–1163), the great proponent of huatou meditation, was dying, his disciples came around and asked, "Please, leave us with a last teaching?" Writing a death poem was and is a big deal in Chan/Zen. People collected them and included them in the discourse records of masters. Dahui picked up the pen and wrote, "Death, or no death, what's the fuss?" And he died. You may say this is the quintessential Chan perspective.

Perhaps one of the defining features of human beings is story making. We reify experiences into "things" and make assessments about them: good, bad; pretty, ugly; life, death; beginning, end. When we deem something good, we want to keep it, prolong it, possess it. When we deem something bad, we try to get rid of it, escape from it, fear it. But "things" are not what we imagine them to be, or how we wish them to be. Conflating our own imaginations with fluid realities is called *prapaāca*, which belongs to the realm of imagination, stories, constructs built on words and language. To resolve something that is imaginary is futile.

What makes us fearful is the stories about death. This fear comes from not knowing what will happen. But this awareness of not knowing projects an image of our self into an imagined future that has yet to come. This in itself is a process of the mind's creation. The whole gamut of fearing the unknown, fueled by our fragmented past experiences, comes from mental constructs of a future that has no reality as yet.

Our narratives and stories are all that we have ever known about ourselves, filtered through words and language, knowledge, and experiences. These ideas are learned, taught, and conditioned – and they shape our experiences, which back up our narratives and stories. So they become very real for us. It is the nature of words to divide, parse out, reify everything into a thing. Once you label something, you make it into a thing and it becomes real for that person. When we divide up reality into birth and death, then we fear death and welcome birth. They define and shape our experience. This is why the Buddha said, "Dreams. Sentient beings are living in their dreams, dreams of their own construct."

Words are useful. We need them to navigate through life. They can be creative and inspiring agents, shaping our life choices. That said, our reality is fluid, beyond constructs. It is inconceivable, where everything is wondrously interconnected and continues. Who says death is the "end?" Who says death is just "nothingness?" Why does it need to be reified into a thing? Everything changes and continues to morph through causes and conditions in wondrousness.

A Chan master once said that if you would like to know the realm of buddhahood, the realm of awakening, observe the times and seasons:

Upon awakening, morning spring is still chilly winter is still cold.

One meaning of this is that despite what we may think about it, the story we create, narrate, convince and share with others – things as they are, are still felt. The experiencing of this moment continues. You can narrate this moment to be cold, this moment to be chilly, pleasant, unpleasant, irrespective of this moment's experience.

Someone once asked me "What's the meaning of life?" I answered, "It's not important what the meaning of life is, it's important how we live our lives." How we live our lives is experiencing this here and now. Since we are in this world of meaning, we make what life is and at the same time we should know that life is so much more beyond what limitations we place on it.

Perhaps I can add a stanza to the Chan poem above,

Before awakening, Spring gives way to summer All nights turn to day.

The significance of this poem is that things are not what we make them out to be, so fixed. However we may wish things to be otherwise, they change. Embracing impermanence is the principle of practice. Our connections with loved ones, friends, teachers, and life, with all of our feelings for them, do not "end" and cannot be defined into this or that. In our imagination, they end. But in reality, everything continues wondrously. This connection and continuity is love and wisdom. Love, without "other." Wisdom, without "self." What is there, then? Connectedness! Love means we cherish all whom we meet without reifying them into "things," without othering them as separate, as different from us. At the same time, we don't impose our self-referential opinions or ideas on them. This is to be without self. In

living our lives this way, we honor everyone including ourselves. And you will see that there is no end, but causes and conditions continue and our connections lead to other connections. Keep our stories and labels fluid; they help navigate our lives. But keep our feelings open, with possibility in sight. Strength lies in emotional openness.

Ten years ago, the most important person in my life passed away, my teacher Master Sheng Yen. I thought the world had ended. When I saw his shell lying on the bed, he was absent. Where was he? Who will be my teacher? I was thinking from my vantage point at the time. The truth is, he was everywhere and nowhere. He is in the blood that runs through my veins and in the teachings left behind; he is in the lives of all of his students, and mine. I see him teaching through my interactions with my students. By honoring him through my practice, we now have a meditation center, a large piece of property to expand into a community for the elderly practitioners, and small houses to convert into retreat dorms. He continues, and the world is continuing. I see him in the connections in all aspects of my life, yet he is nowhere for an "I" to grasp.

Death should not be made into an unchanging "thing," a prapañca, a story we construct. But it can be an inspiration, a vow, to honor this moment with others, with love and wisdom. Our mornings may still be chilly and winters may still be cold, but seasons change and nights always bring on a brand new day.  $\infty$ 



# Bodhisattva Precepts

A CHAN VIEW



Photo by Ven. Chang Duo

The very spirit of the bodhisattva precepts is the vow to benefit others.

Through genuinely benefiting others, we ultimately benefit ourselves.

22

CHAN MASTER SHENG YEN

The Six Paramitas, 2002



Photo by Tong-Yang Lee



The Second CMC Bodhisattva Precepts Ceremony – Dec. 8, 1997 DDM Archive Photo



Bodhisattva Precepts Ceremony at DDRC – May 20, 2018 CMC Archive Photo



Photo by Charles Hsu

# Bodhisattva Precepts Report By Ian Urquhart

I had no preconceptions entering into this experience. I have attended many retreats at Dharma Drum Retreat Center (DDRC), but this was the first ritual function I participated in. I had heard that this ceremony was only conducted every few years, so when I saw it listed on the website I had to go for the opportunity.

The first impression that landed had to do with its size. It was easily more than twice the size of any DDRC retreat I had attended in the past. The entire hall was filled with participants and volunteers.

Many things were similar to previous experiences. The food was still some of the best in the whole wide world. The volunteers and monastics brimming with compassion, always on hand to be of assistance whenever it was required.

The main difference was its ritual aspect. At first, I couldn't help but smirking at all the funny little things we were being instructed to do perfectly. Put on the robe just like this. Fold it like that. Kneel, prostrate, bow in this specific manner. Face this way. Face that way. It was definitely more complicated than the other events I had been on.

After a few days I started to view it differently. It was all about respect, all about mindfulness in every little act. It was about flowing in the stream of tradition. Honoring it, being guided by it. When I thought of it from this perspective I began to take it very seriously and respectfully.

I had never thought much about the precepts before this experience. All I wanted was the wisdom and concentration of Chan. After listening to the talks and reflecting on my experiences, I began to realize that the precepts are an integral part of both wisdom and concentration. Not only are they a stabilizing influence that allows the mind to concentrate and wisdom be realized, they are interdependent. Wisdom and concentration both demand that the precepts be followed.

In terms of practice, the repentance prostrations were very powerful. I have not cried in the last four years as much as I have in the past four days. Without addressing all of my shortcomings I was not rid of them even a little bit. Even without consciously bringing them to mind, they were still there, hidden underneath the rug, moldering. Bringing these misdeeds to full awareness, to admit that they did indeed happen, that I am responsible for them, and to genuinely accept the consequences was very powerful. I feel refreshed and cleansed after having aired my dirty laundry in front of the Buddha. I dare say that I also experienced a drop in the ocean of compassion he bears for poor deluded fools such as myself.

Not only do I feel refreshed and unburdened from my experience, but I also feel empowered. Not in the egotistical way that I would once have, but in a very grounded way. I feel affirmed in my wish to be of benefit to other sentient beings, to fulfill my vows. I will be able to use these precepts, particularly the Three Cumulative Precepts, to guide my volition, to stay on the Path and not stray. I am very grateful to all of the monastics involved, all of the volunteers, and all of my fellow participants.  $\sim$ 

# Three Avatars

### by Ernest Heau

### 1 Vairocana

In Buddhist mythology,
Vairocana is the primordial Buddha,
the Dharma Body in its cosmic aspect
and by virtue of that,
omnipresent, everywhere to be seen,
heard, touched, yet nowhere to be seen,
and therefore, mystical and perfect.

Here and now
in this infinite circle
of original space
His Bliss Body in repose
palms together
attentive yet silent.

Whirling in space
in this among all universes
as if all things since
time without beginning
were destined
to converge on a point.

The myriad sentient beings living apace and dying alone wanting to give homage yet not knowing how their ardent tears wasted on foolish endeavors.

In such a time, in such a time, as conditions ripen to needs the Avatar of Light manifests to speak the Dharma once again to those who would hear it.

His words swirl and echo cascading and resounding through caves and forests over mountains and rivers in the depths of the seas.

As if they were true As if they were true As if they were true.



Original Art by Chien-Chih Liu

### 11 Bodhidharma

Recognized as the First Patriarch of Chan,
little is known about Bodhidharma,
except that he arrived in China,
spent years meditating at Shaolin
before beginning to teach, and then disappeared,
leaving behind only a few hints as to who he was.

It is not likely that Bodhidharma went to China for its fabled cuisine,

Nor to dress in the finest of silks, brocaded with plum blossoms and birds.

Even less did he come to be courted by the pious and earnest Emperor Wu.

And yet he stayed, despite few prospects, a barbarian among the refined Chinese.

Nine years spent gazing at a rocky wall, coming out with little to show for it.

And yet, we recall his long sojourn, how he left behind a single sandal.

So what did Bodhidharma know that you and I still cannot fathom?

What can the caves of Shaolin tell us about the way to transcendence?

What did you see, old man Bodhidharma? Tell us! Speak! Speak! We listen.



Art by Chien-Chih Liu

# III Xuyun

One night, Master Xuyun's attendant was pouring hot water into the master's teacup, which the master was holding.

When the water overflowed,

Xuyun dropped the cup,
and when it shattered on the ground,
he realized profound awakening.

What is the samadhi that can be contained in a cup of tea, when the heat of realization boils over into becoming?

Within the womb of space that encloses aspiration, the buddha-embryo gives birth to bodhi-mind.

When the shattered mind-ground became whole and luminous, the shards of time were dispersed And the path became clear. Within the integral mind all things are possible, all things resolve into unfathomable clarity.

Art by Chien-Chih Liu

# Chan Meditation Retreats

### 7-Day Intensive Chan Retreat

Led by Simon Child

March 23 - 30, 2019

Plein-air House of the Academy of Fine Arts Dluzew Poland

**CONTACT** budwod@budwod.com.pl www.czan.eu/en/

### 7-Day Silent Illumination Retreat

Led by Ven. Guo Yi

April 5 – 12, 20189

DDM Vancouver Center · Richmond, BC, Canada

**CONTACT** meditation1@ddmba.ca www.ddmba.ca

### 21-Day Chan Retreat

Led by Ven. Chi Chern

July 27 - August 17, 2019

Plein-air House of the Academy of Fine Arts Dluzew Poland

**CONTACT** budwod@budwod.com.pl www.czan.eu/en/

### 3-Day City Retreat

Led by Ven. Chang Hwa

May 25 – 27, 20189

Chan Meditation Center · Elmhurst, NY, USA

**CONTACT** chancenter@gmail.com www.chancenter.org

### 14-Day Silent Illumination Retreat

Using Master Sheng Yen's DVDs

March 8 – 24, 2019

### Silent Illumination Intensive Retreat

Led by Simon Child & Rebecca Li

May 25 - June 2, 2019

Dharma Drum Retreat Center • Pine Bush, NY, USA

### **Weekend Meditation Class**

Led by **Abbot Guo Yuan** 

May 3 – 5, 2019

### Intensive Retreat: Realizing the Bodhisattva Way

Led by **Gilbert Gutierrez** 

July 5 – 12, 2019

**CONTACT** apply@dharmadrumretreat.org www.dharmadrumretreat.org



# Chan Meditation Center Affiliates

NORTH AMERICAN CENTERS					
	uddhist Association	MC) • Chang Hwa Fashi, D (DDMBA) America (DDM USA Hea			
90-56 Corona Avenue Elmhurst, NY 11373	(718) 592-6593	chancenter@gmail.com	www.chancenter.org www.ddmba.org		
Dharma Drum F	Retreat Cen	t <b>er (DDRC) •</b> Guo Yuan F	ashi, Abbot		
184 Quannacut Road Pine Bush, NY 12566	(845) 744-8114	ddrc@dharmadrumretreat.org	www.dharmadrumretreat.org		
DDM Los Angele	DDM Los Angeles Center • Guo Jiann Fashi, Director				
4530 North Peck Road El Monte, CA 91732	(626) 350–4388	ddmbala@gmail.com	www.ddmbala.org		
DDM Massachusetts Buddhist Association (aka DDM Dharmakaya Center)					
319 Lowell Street Lexington, MA 02420	(781) 863-1936		www.massba.org		
DDM San Francisco Bay Area Center • Chang Xing Fashi, Director					
255 H Street Fremont, CA 94536	(510) 246-8264	info@ddmbasf.org	www.ddmbasf.org		
DDM Vancouver Center • Chang Wu Fashi, Director					
8240 No.5 Road Richmond, BC V6Y-2V4	(604) 277–1357	info@ddmba.ca	www.ddmba.ca		

TAIWAN - WORLD HEADQUARTERS				
Dharma Drum Mountain World Center for Buddhist Education				
No. 555, Fagu Rd. Jinshan Dist. New Taipei 20842	02-2498-7171 02-2498-7174	webmaster@ddm.org.tw	www.ddm.org.tw	

DHARMA DRUM MOUNTAIN - NORTH AMERICA				
California	Los Angeles Chapter	(626) 350-4388	Tina Wang	ddmbala@gmail.com www.ddmbala.org
	Sacramento	(916) 681-2416	Janice Tsai	ddmbasacra@yahoo.com www.sacramento.ddmusa.org
	San Francisco Chapter	(408) 900-7125	Kyle Shih	ddmbasf@gmail.com www.ddmbasf.org
Connecticut	Fairfield County Branch	(203) 912-0734	Alice Peng	contekalice@aol.com
	Hartford Branch	(860) 805-3588	Lingyun Wang	cmchartfordct@gmail.com www.ddmhartfordct.org
	Gainesville	(352) 336-5301	Lian Huey Chen	LianFlorida@hotmail.com
	Miami	(954) 432-8683	May Lee	ddmbaus@yahoo.com
Florida	Orlando	(321) 917-6923	Anchi Chang	achang1117@gmail.com
	Tallahassee Chapter	(850) 274-3996	Frances Berry	tallahassee.chan@gmail.com www.tallahasseechan.com
Georgia	Atlanta Branch	(678) 809-5392	Sophia Chen	Schen@eleganthf.net
Illinois	Chicago Chapter	(847) 255-5483	Shiou Loh	ddmbachicago@gmail.com www.ddmbachicago.org
Massachusetts	Boston Branch	(978)-394-1391	Jinghua Zhou	ddm.boston@gmail.com
Michigan	Lansing Branch	(517) 332-0003	Li-Hua Kong	lkong2006@gmail.com
Missouri	St. Louis Branch	(636) 825-3889	Tai-Ling Chin	acren@aol.com
New Jersey	Edison Chapter	(732) 249-1898	Jia-Shu Kuo	enews@ddmba-nj.org www.ddmba-nj.org
Nevada	Las Vegas	(702) 896-4108	Mabel Lin	yhl2527@yahoo.com
North Carolina	Cary	(919) 677-9030	Ming-An Lee	minganlee58@gmail.com
Ontario	Toronto Chapter	(416) 855-0531	Evelyn Wang	ddmba.toronto@gmail.com www.ddmbaontario.org
Tayas	Dallas Branch	(682) 552-0519	Patty Chen	ddmba_patty@hotmail.com
Texas	Houston	(832) 279-6786	Yi-Peng Shao	g9g9@msn.com
Utah	Salt Lake City	(810) 947-9019	Inge Fan	Inge_Fan@hotmail.com
Vermont	Burlington	(802) 658-3413	Jui-chu Lee	juichulee@yahoo.com www.ddmbavt.org
Washington	Seattle Chapter	(425) 957-4597	Gary Lin	ddmba.seattle@gmail.com seattle.ddmusa.org
Washington, DC	DC Branch	(240) 424-5486	Jack Chang	chan@ddmbadc.org

# Chan Meditation Center Affiliates

MEXICO				
Nayarit	Chacala	(800) 257-0532 (800) 505-8005	Dr. Laura del Valle	info@mardejade.com www.mardejade.com
		ASIA an	d OCEANIA	
Australia	Melbourne	(03) 8822-3187	Tess Hu	info@ddmmelbourne.org.au www.ddmmelbourne.org.au
	Sydney	(61-4) 1318-5603 (61-2) 9283-3168 (Fax)	Agnes Chow	ddmsydney@yahoo.com.au www.ddm.org.au
	Kowloon	(852) 2865-3110 (852) 2591-4810 (Fax)	Chang Zhan Fashi,	info@ddmhk.org.hk
Hong Kong	Island	(852) 3955-0077 (852) 3590-3640 (Fax)	Director	www.ddmhk.org.hk
Malaysia	Selangor	(60-3) 7960-0841 (60-3) 7960-0842 (Fax)	Chang Zao Fashi, Director	admin@ddm.org.my www.ddm.org.my
Singapore	Singapore	(65) 6735-5900 (65) 6224-2655 (Fax)	Gan SweeHwa Joe	ddrumsingapore@gmail.com www.ddsingapore.org
Thailand	Bangkok	(662) 713-7815 (662) 713-7816 (662) 713-7638 (Fax)	Porntip Chupinijsak	ddmbkk2005@gmail.com www.ddmth.com
		EU	JROPE	
Belgium	Luxemburg	(352) 400-080 (352) 290-311 (Fax)	Li-chuan Lin	ddm@chan.lu
Croatia	Zagreb	(385) 1-481 00 74	Žarko Andričević	info@dharmaloka.org www.dharmaloka.org www.chan.hr
Poland	Zalesie Górne	(48) 22-736-2252 (48) 60-122-4999 (48) 22-736-2251 (Fax)	Paweł Rościszewski	budwod@budwod.com.pl www.czan.org.pl www.czan.eu
Curitacalon	Zurich	(411) 382-1676	Max Kälin	MaxKailin@chan.ch www.chan.ch
Switzerland	Bern	(31) 352-2243	Hildi Thalmann	hthalmann@gmx.net www.chan-bern.ch
United	Bury	(44) 193-484-2017	Simon Child	admin@westernchanfellowship.org www.westernchanfellowship.org
Kingdom	London		Orca Liew	liew853@btinternet.com www.chanmeditationlondon.org

## **Entering the Gateless**

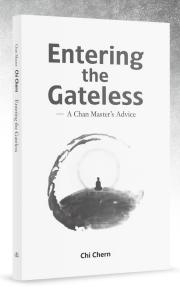
A Chan Master's Advice

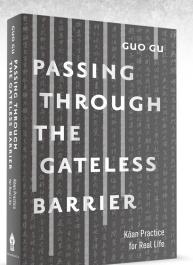
### Chan Master Chi Chern

If you have read or heard about Chan (Zen) retreats, and you are curious about what a silent meditation retreat might be like, this little book of introduction will walk you through a landscape of the meditation world where, eventually, you will find nothing except that your original self is immaculate.

In this collection of short writings, Master Chi Chern's profound teachings are delivered in an easy to understand manner that both long-time meditators and beginners greatly enjoy and benefit from. With a poetic style of friendly advice, he offers you encouragement and guidance as you are inspired to learn further and take on a meditation practice.

Candlelight Books • ISBN 978-0-9970912-1-2





# **Passing Through the Gateless Barrier**

Kōan Practice for Real Life

### Guo Gu

The forty-eight koans of the Gateless Barrier (Chinese: Wumenguan; Japanese: Mumonkan) have been waking people up for well over eight hundred years. Chan teacher Guo Gu provides here a fresh translation of the classic text, along with the first English commentary by a teacher of the Chinese tradition from which it originated. He shows that the koans in this text are not mere stories from a distant past, but are rather pointers to the places in our lives where we get stuck – and that each sticking point, when examined, can become a gateless barrier through which we can enter into profound wisdom.

Shambhala Publications • ISBN 978-1-61180-281-8