

Chan | 禪 | Magazine

Autumn 2004



Chan Meditation Center

**Institute of Chung-Hwa Buddhist Culture
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“Our world is evolving from regionalism into globalism; we have transformed our closed ethnic societies into societies characterized by multi-cultural diversity; we are moving away from nationalistic concerns toward concerns for the shared security and well-being of the entire human race...Therefore, in the twenty-first century, people who continue to engage in stirring up interracial hatred, in inciting adversity between religions, in establishing all kinds of barriers, in viewing people of different cultures and ethnicities as enemies, will in consequence isolate themselves from the entire human race.”

—Ven. Master Sheng Yen
From his opening address to
the World Youth Peace Summit
Taipei Conference, July 11, 2004

Chan Magazine

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From The Editor

I begin with a disclaimer: Though those of you who read this column regularly must have some idea what my politics are, I try hard not to use these pages to promote my political views, and I certainly would not use them to endorse a candidate. I do not do so now.

Just two weeks ago Master Sheng Yen said to a group of young people selected as potential future leaders, “The impact of events in any corner of the world can be felt globally...It is no longer possible for anyone to be indifferent to the happenings of the world.” It is in this spirit, I hope, that I respond to the big story of the last few days—big enough that despite all politics being local it made front pages the world over—the Democratic National Convention.

Now, I redirected much of my energy from political action to practice over thirty years ago, and though I am not without preferences, when it comes to politics I am more cynical than partisan, so I was caught completely by surprise when my heart welled up and my eyes filled with tears during a speech to the delegates in Boston. The speaker was Teresa Heinz Kerry, a white woman born in Africa, and the words were: “Y a todos los Hispanos, y los Latinos; a tous les Franco-Américains; a tutti gli Italiani; a toda la familia Portuguesa e Brasileira; and to all the continental Africans living in this country; and to all the new Americans in our country: I invite you to join in our conversation...” and the rest was all freedom and democracy and... good things, yes, but what you’d expect in a political

speech, and what would never, on their own, have moved me.

And as she told her story, I found myself moved again and again by, I think, the enormous chasm that appeared between the facts of the life she has lived and what we Americans think and know.

Mrs. Kerry was born and raised in Mozambique—not the country, the Portuguese colony. (Mozambique gained its independence in 1975.) Her father voted for the first time in his life at the age of 73. How many Americans have any idea how fresh and raw are the memories of colonialism in much of the rest of the world?

In the late 50’s, as a student at a then integrated university in Johannesburg, Mrs. Kerry marched against the threatened expansion of apartheid into higher education. She and her fellow-students failed, and the Higher Education Apartheid Act finished the job of segregating South Africa, just as we, in this country, were beginning to contemplate the Civil Rights Act of 1964. How many of us Americans are aware that history is not simply a great march forward, but that our species is capable of making breathtaking leaps backward, as we did in Germany in the 30’s, in South Africa in the 50’s, in China in the 60’s, in Argentina in the 70’s...and where, in how many places today?

So when Mrs. Kerry went on, as she did, to speak of freedom and democracy, it seemed clear to me that hers was not the hackneyed

freedom and democracy that we're so used to, but the cherished freedom and democracy of one who had known life without them; just as when she had spoken in Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese and flawless English these had not been languages studied backstage to tap into the immigrant vote, but the languages of a life lived in a larger world, the world Shifu describes as increasingly "characterized by multi-cultural diversity," a world that, though it is quickly overtaking us, most Americans have not yet joined.

As I said at the top, this is not an endorsement of the Democratic ticket, nor do I mean it to be a condemnation of Americans. I mean only to report on an experience, the experience of becoming aware of something quite foreign, an experience I found quite moving, an experience I highly recommend. Google "Teresa Heinz Kerry text" and I'm sure you'll find it.



Dharma of Teachings, Dharma of Mind

by

Chan Master Sheng Yen

In May of 2003, Master Sheng Yen held a Chan Retreat in Moscow that was organized by Wuji-men, a Russian martial arts club. During the retreat, Master Sheng Yen lectured on teachings from the Platform Sutra by the Sixth Patriarch Huineng. This is the first of six articles based on those lectures. Douglas Gildow made the oral translation from Chinese to English. Transcriptions were prepared by Chang Wen Shi, Bruce Rickenbacher, and Victor Ku, and edited by Ernest Heau with assistance from Chang Wen Shi.

**May 10, 2003
Morning Lecture**

During this retreat, I will explain the practice of Chan, how one realizes liberation, and the meaning of no-self and enlightenment.

The Dharma of the Teachings

All human problems originate in the mind. The activities of our mind lead to actions that have consequences, and all this results in suffering as well as happiness. When we experience suffering and happiness, we respond with actions that create more suffering and more happiness. When we are unhappy we seek happiness and when we find happiness we fear losing it. For example, when we are sick or events are not going well for us,

unless we master our own minds, they will be adversely influenced. According to internal and external conditions, our minds will fluctuate between happiness and unhappiness. This is vexation.

Recognizing this, the Buddha taught us that the activities of the mind lead to more suffering than happiness. No external power other than our own minds causes this. What the Buddha taught is not shallow idealism but truths that stress how causes and conditions affect our experience. These causes and conditions result from our acts of body, speech, and mind in this as well many previous lives. All these activities create consequences, resulting in the body we now have and the environment we now experience. Therefore, our present circumstances originate in and are rooted in the mind. This is a broad description of karma.

When we clearly understand how our minds create the conditions that manifest in our lives, we can also understand how this mind created what we call the “self”. While having this self can be said to be good, it is not absolutely good because our lives have many imperfections, and we often feel dissatisfied and insecure. Therefore, we practice Chan in order to solve this fundamental problem—that the mind is the cause of our own suffering. Chan helps us use our own mind-power to avoid being adversely influenced by the body and the environment, and thus create less karma. To fully accomplish this is called being enlightened, or seeing one’s self-nature.

Chan, indeed, all of Buddhism, is based on this theory of how the mind creates its own suffering, and how one can practice the Dharma — what the Buddha taught — to relieve suffering. This theory we can call the Dharma of the Teachings and it consists basically of methods for training the mind to cease creating the causes and conditions for suffering. Without this theory as a basis, Chan practice would be meaningless. Chan is training the mind to ultimately realize the Mind Dharma. To realize the Mind Dharma, you first hear the Dharma of the Teachings, and then you practice accordingly.



The Mind Dharma

If you can attain the Mind Dharma without practicing the methods of Chan, you don't need the Dharma of the Teachings. Otherwise, you need the Dharma of the Teachings to practice towards realizing the Dharma of Mind.

Here is a story that illustrates the meaning of Mind Dharma. In the sixth century (C.E.), the twenty-eighth generation disciple of the Buddha, the Indian monk Bodhidharma, went to China to spread the Dharma. He traveled from south to north without attracting many disciples. When he arrived at Pine Mountain in Hunan Province, he meditated for nine years facing a wall in a cave. Finally a young monk named Huike came and offered himself as a disciple, but Bodhidharma declined his offer. It was cold and snowing, and Huike just stood outside of the cave hoping that Bodhidharma would accept him. When the snow had reached Huike's knees, Bodhidharma looked out and saw Huike still standing there. According to legend, Bodhidharma also saw that Huike had cut off one of his arms to demonstrate his sincerity. Convinced that Huike was sincere, Bodhidharma asked him what he wanted to know.

Huike replied, "Master, can you put my mind at peace?"

Bodhidharma answered, "Show me your mind and I will put it at peace."

Huike had been standing in the snow for a long time, and by then had no wandering thoughts. His attachment to any sense of self was also gone. So when he looked into his mind to find it, he could not.

He told Bodhidharma, "I can't find my mind."

Bodhidharma replied, "See, I have already put your mind at peace."

Upon hearing these words Huike immediately attained the Mind Dharma, that is to say, he was enlightened.

When Bodhidharma asked Huike to find his mind, Huike could not because he no longer had a self-center. Originally, his dependent and resisting mind was seeking to escape vexations. Now, he no longer had a mind that depended on Bodhidharma to give him a solution. Not finding his resisting, dependent, and seeking mind, all of which are the mind of the "self", his enlightened mind manifested. It is not that Bodhidharma gave him something concrete and tangible; rather, he helped Huike look inside his own mind to discover no-mind. This no-mind is also called the mind of wisdom, and it was this Dharma of Mind that Bodhidharma transmitted to Huike and to generations of Chan followers.

Afternoon Lecture: "Abiding Nowhere, Give Rise to Mind"

As we use it, the term "no-mind" describes a mind in which there is no attachment or self-centeredness whatsoever, a mind in which there is no dependence, no resistance, and no expectation. This is a mind without craving, anger, doubt, and jealousy, the emotions that arise when we are insecure and seek safety, or when we are unhappy and seek happiness. If we can put down these negative mind-states, then it is possible for wisdom to arise. This

arising of the mind of wisdom is also called enlightenment, or “seeing the nature.” Seeing the nature means seeing one’s own Buddha nature, which is that of emptiness. This means that the “self” that we take to be inherent in our being is in fact empty, without enduring characteristics. A Chinese phrase to describe enlightenment is “to illumine the mind and see the nature.”

Here is another story about Mind Dharma. Master Huineng, who was later recognized as the Sixth Patriarch of Chan, was still a woodcutter when he walked past a house and by chance heard someone within reciting lines from the Diamond Sutra. He heard these words that affected him greatly: “Abiding nowhere, give rise to mind.”

These words made a deep impression on Huineng. “Abiding nowhere” means that while the mind has a function, it should not fixate on any phenomena. Rather, it should reflect phenomena like a mirror, without being affected by them. A mirror will reflect objects in front of it, but when the objects move away the mirror no longer reflects them. In other words, to the mirror, the reflections are “non-abiding.”

Furthermore, in a very high-quality mirror, the reflections will appear without distortion. So, “abiding nowhere” means that one should be aware of the vexations of the mind, but not

attach to them. “Give rise to mind” refers to a mind that is without attachment but still functions, and this function is wisdom.

Huineng was so moved by these words that he asked the man who was chanting where he could find someone who could teach him about the sutra. The man told him to visit Master Hongren, who had a deep knowledge of the Diamond Sutra. However, when Huineng arrived at Hongren’s monastery, the master did not teach him any Dharma. He merely sent Huineng to the kitchen to mill rice. And when Hongren taught the Dharma to the other monks, Huineng was not allowed to listen.

This situation, in which Huineng was depending on Hongren to give him teaching, was similar to Huike at first depending on Bodhidharma. However, Hongren understood that Huineng had the capacity to discover the Mind Dharma for himself. Since the Mind Dharma cannot be transmitted, Hongren’s method was to let Huineng discover the Mind Dharma by himself. And indeed, Huineng succeeded in finding it by himself. But originally, Huineng thought that non-abiding meant no vexation, and that wisdom was something like being a mirror, as if they were tangible. After eight months in the kitchen he discovered no-mind, and realized that vexation and wisdom were themselves empty. Master Hongren gave transmission to Huineng, thus designating him as his Dharma heir.

“IF YOU ARE WALKING, JUST WALK. IF YOU ARE COUNTING YOUR BREATH, JUST COUNT THE BREATH . . . WHATEVER YOUR BODY IS DOING IN THE PRESENT MOMENT. BE PRESENT WITH THAT, OTHERWISE YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO PUT DOWN THE PRESENT.”

In keeping with non-abiding, the method you should use [on this retreat] is to always keep the body and the mind in the present moment. Please put down all thoughts of the past, put down thoughts of the future, and practice just remaining in the present. Be aware of your body and the environment around you, but do not be influenced by either. Do not allow them to create extra thoughts in your mind. Your only thought is to focus on your method. If you are walking, just walk. If you are counting your breath, just count the breath. If you are using the huatou, that is your exclusive focus. If you are contemplating the breath, just contemplate the breath. Whatever your body is doing in the present moment, be present with that, otherwise you will not be able to put down the present.

Evening Lecture: Huineng's Verse on No-form

Tonight I will begin talking about the verse on wuxiang, or "no-form," by Huineng:

Mastery of the teachings and mastery of mind

Are like the sun in the empty sky.

Only by transmitting the Dharma of seeing the nature

Can one emerge into the world and shatter erroneous doctrines.

Although in the Dharma itself there is no sudden or gradual,

In confusion and enlightenment there is slowness and speed.

Yet this gateway into seeing the nature

Cannot be fully comprehended by the ignorant.

Although myriad teachings abound,

Combined with principle they are ultimately one.

Within the dark abode of vexations
One should continually give rise to the sun of wisdom.

When erroneous mind-states come, vexations arrive;

When the correct comes, the vexations are removed.

(Translation by Master Sheng Yen and Douglas Gildow)

This is only a portion of Huineng's verse on no-form, and we will try to cover as much as we can. The main thing I want to do is to explain Huineng's teaching on formlessness.

According to the belief in Shakyamuni Buddha's time, to be fully liberated meant becoming an arhat, and to become an arhat one must be a monk or a nun. But to Huineng, anyone who practices in accordance with the principle of no-form can be liberated. So, originally, liberation meant that one had transcended the birth-and-death cycle of samsara by entering nirvana. This is the way of an arhat. However, in the view of Master Huineng, liberation meant that one no longer had vexations and was no longer influenced by the environment, but one also remained in the world to practice and to help others. In this Mahayana view, liberation does not require ordination, and one does not need to leave this world. This is the way of the bodhisattva.

How do the words from the Diamond Sutra relate to "no-form," or "formlessness?" The sutra discusses formlessness in relation to both time and space. In relation to time, the word "form" here is not the form of the five skandhas—form, sensation, perception, volition, and consciousness—the five aggregates

of the “self.” Here, it means something more like “phenomenon” or “objective perception.” These forms are actually thoughts relating to the past, present, and future. Here on retreat, we are already practicing dropping thoughts of past and future, and just keeping our mind in the present. The goal is ultimately to drop attachment to even the present mind and its forms.

The second aspect of formlessness relates to space, and this includes oneself, other people, and sentient beings. The self we call the “I”, while other people are those in contrast to this “I”. Sentient beings are all forms of sentient life. In discussing no-form, we should understand that anything we perceive is constantly changing, and therefore impermanent, without inherent self-nature. Self, others, and sentient beings are all objects of perception and likewise impermanent.

The temporal aspect of form relates to past, present, and future mind, and the spatial aspect relates to self, others, and sentient beings. Nevertheless, the forms of time and space are completely interlinked, and it is impossible to draw a firm line between the two. But all temporal and spatial forms are impermanent, which means that they are empty of self-nature and therefore ultimately formless.

“Abiding nowhere, give rise to mind” means that one must realize — not just know intellectually — that forms in time are transient and ultimately lack self-nature. Likewise, spatial forms are also in flux, impermanent, and lack self-nature. For these reasons, one does not abide in forms of time or space, and does not cling to them.

“Give rise to mind” refers to the arising of the wisdom function when we do not cling to forms. But wisdom itself is a form, so one does not abide in it either, and one does not attach to it. Instead, one goes beyond wisdom to realize no-mind. So, this is the no-form, or formlessness, that Huineng speaks of in the Platform Sutra.

Mastery of Teachings, Mastery of Mind

Let’s now look at the first line of Huineng’s verse:

Mastery of the teachings and mastery of mind
Are like the sun in the empty sky.

In this line, the Chinese *shoutong* has been translated here as “mastery of the teachings,” and *xintong* as “mastery of [one’s] mind.” So, from this interpretation, *shoutong* means mastery of the Dharma of the Teachings, and *xintong* means mastery of the Mind Dharma. However, to have mastery of either, you must actually experience the Mind Dharma.

If you can directly master the Mind Dharma, there is no need to study the Dharma of the Teachings. Otherwise, you can begin with the Dharma of Teachings to help you ultimately realize the Mind Dharma. At that time you will see that the Dharma of the Teachings and the Mind Dharma are one and the same. Though they are the same, one can speak of the Dharma of the Teachings, but one cannot speak of the Mind Dharma. Nevertheless, the aim of the Dharma of the Teachings is to realize the Mind Dharma. In other words, we use language and concepts to reach what is ulti-

mately beyond language and concepts.

Here is a question for you. So far have I been talking about the Dharma of the Teachings, or of the Mind Dharma, or both? Well, the answer is that so long as we use language and concepts, we can only talk about the Dharma of the Teachings. The Chan School has a saying, "No reliance on words and scriptures." In other words, Chan does not recommend relying solely on the Dharma of Teachings. But the curious fact is that the Chan patriarchs and masters left behind more teachings than any other school of Buddhism. For thirty years, I have been all over the world saying that the Mind Dharma cannot be spoken. And yet the purpose of all of this writing and teaching is to teach people not to rely on words.

Realizing No-Form

In Chan, life itself is practice and the early masters did not much encourage practitioners to do seated meditation. Huineng himself did not do sitting meditation, and neither did some of his famous disciples, such as Huairang and Xingyen. There is a story in which Huairang one day observed his disciple Mazu sitting in meditation all day long. Huairang took a brick and sat next to Mazu and started to polish the brick. After some time, Mazu became curious and asked Huairang, "Why are you polishing that brick?"

Huairang said, "I am polishing this brick to make it into a mirror."

Mazu thought this was absurd and said, "You can't make a mirror by polishing a brick!"

Huairang replied, "Well, what are you doing when you sit?"

Mazu replied, "I am sitting so I can become a Buddha."

Huairang replied, "Well, if I can't make a mirror by polishing a brick, neither can you become a Buddha by sitting."

Mazu asked, "What should I do then?"

Huairang replied, "When the ox refuses to pull its cart, do you whip the ox or the cart?"

Mazu replied, "Of course, I would whip the ox."

And Huairang said, "It is the mind that attains buddhahood. If you cannot let go of mind, then you cannot attain buddhahood simply by sitting. One must put down the mind."

When Mazu heard this and was able to put down his mind, he became enlightened. Until then, he had been working on his body instead of his mind. In other words, he finally learned to whip the ox rather than the cart. Simply by dropping mind, Mazu naturally attained enlightenment. From this story we can infer that in the early Chan School, seated meditation was not emphasized. This is not to say that we do not use our bodies at all. We use the body as a tool for practice, but sitting meditation is not the whole of practice. If sitting meditation simply turns into an exercise in training our legs, then it is useless. But if we use the body as a tool for training the mind it can be very useful.

Those who don't sit at all and those who are overly attached to sitting are both incorrect. When we have the proper attitude, sitting is a relatively easy way to stabilize our confused

minds. Therefore, sitting is still important. If, however, during regular daily life one can maintain a calm and stable mind, then, when sufficient causes and conditions mature, one can attain enlightenment that way. However, a precondition for this path to enlightenment is to have a clear understanding of emptiness, no-self, and no-mind. Without this understanding, even with a calm and stable mind, one cannot become enlightened.

To realize no-mind and no-form, one must have a clear and continual awareness of mind and forms. Before one can do that, one must start with a stable mind. With a busy and confused mind, one does not know what mind itself is, and one does not know what

the so-called forms of time and forms of space are. Merely conceptual knowledge of emptiness, no-self, and no-mind is of limited use. It is only knowledge, not real experience.

Daily life is practice. However, because most people's minds are confused, there is a need for places like Chan halls for meditating. Most people are unable in their daily life to stabilize and calm their minds, or perceive the true emptiness of forms. While there is no doubt that sudden enlightenment is attainable, most people need to use the gradual approach. However, even in gradual practice, there is a precondition to train the mind so that it can be known and be put down.



The photograph on the facing page is by David Kabacinski, also known as Chang Wen, and now as Chang Wen Shi.

David joined the staff of Chan Magazine as Photography Editor for the Summer 2002 issue, and as we reported, joined the Sangha and received the title of “postulant” in November of 2003. Earlier this year David completed the first phase of his training and is now a full-fledged Buddhist monk (the significance of the honorific “Shi” appended to his Dharma name).

Unfortunately for us at the magazine, David’s continuing training will make it impossible for him to continue on our editorial staff. Fortunately for us, he has been replaced by another gifted photographer, Jeffrey Fang, whose work can be seen on many other pages of this issue.

We thank David for his many beautiful contributions to Chan Magazine over the last several years, as we thank him for having made the choice to “leave home” for the benefit of others, and we pray that the power of his practice will reduce the suffering of innumerable sentient beings.

—The Editor





The Significance of the World Youth Peace Summit Taipei Conference

From July 23 to 25 Dharma Drum Mountain hosted the 2004 World Youth Peace Summit Taipei Conference – Leadership Training Program at the National Taiwan Science Education Center in Taipei. During the three-day conference more than 100 young people, selected during the first phase of WYPS conferences, participated in in-depth discussions led by established business and political leaders on the themes of eliminating spiritual poverty and pursuing global peace. The following is the text of Master Sheng Yen's opening address to the conference.

How does one become an outstanding leader of the twenty-first century? My advice is: Other than possessing talents and professional skills, one also needs to have a sense of ethical responsibility. One needs to have a mission of promoting world peace, to possess the unique characteristics of humility, honesty and stability, and to look upon the whole human race with forgiveness and love. Only then can one create true happiness for oneself and only then can one bring sustainable peace to the entire human race.

The World Youth Peace Summit is one of the central initiatives of the World Council of Religious Leaders.

In 2000, the Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders was held

in the New York Headquarters of the United Nations. After the Summit, the World Council of Religious Leaders was launched as a permanent body. Its mission is to work with the United Nations in the initiatives for world peace from the domains of religion, race, poverty, environmental protection, youth, and women, and to gather the collective strength of governments and business sectors to promote the global peace movement.

I was initially elected as a member of the Board of the World Council of Religious Leaders. During a Board meeting in Bangkok, I was then elected as the Chairman of the Board. With us today are Mr. Bawa Jain, the Secretary General of the World Council of Religious Leaders and Ms. Dena Merriam, who is one of the founding Board members.

Based on the vision of the Millennium World Peace Summit, we hosted a conference on religious cooperation for the religious leaders of Taiwan at the Grand Hotel in the city of Taipei in 2001. In 2003, in a council meeting in Kyoto, Japan, a decision was made to convene the World Youth Peace Summit. It was also decided in Kyoto that we would begin with the Asian Pacific World Youth Peace Summit. This was convened in February 2004 at the UNESCAP in Bangkok. Youth from thirty-seven countries and regions participated. Subsequently, another regional World Youth Peace Summit was held in Bosnia. This Taipei conference is also part of the series of World Youth Peace Summits that will culminate in a global World Youth Peace Summit in the near future.

The significance of this series of World Youth Peace Summits is that they will assemble outstanding youth from all over the world to take up the responsibility of promoting the security and sustainable peace of the entire human race. In addition, the participants will be challenged to cultivate an outlook of global ethics and a comprehensive sense of global responsibility. As today's youth, you will become leaders of this century and you will be the hope of the future.

The human race of the twenty-first century has come a long way. Our world is evolving from regionalism into globalism; we have transformed our closed ethnic societies into societies characterized by multi-cultural diversity; we are moving away from nationalistic concerns toward concerns for the shared security and well-being of the entire human race. The impact of events in any corner of the world can be felt globally. This is aptly

“THE IMPACT OF EVENTS IN ANY CORNER OF THE WORLD CAN BE FELT GLOBALLY. THIS IS APTLY DESCRIBED BY THE CHINESE PROVERB THAT THE WHOLE BODY WILL MOVE WHEN EVEN A SINGLE STRAND OF HAIR IS PULLED. INDEED, WE SHARE THE BURDEN OF ALL CALAMITIES . . . AND THE BENEFITS OF ALL BLESSINGS. . .”

described by the Chinese proverb that the whole body will move when even a single strand of hair is pulled. Indeed, we share the burden of all calamities and we certainly share the benefits of all blessings, too. It is no longer possible for anyone to be indifferent to the happenings of the world.

Therefore, in the twenty-first century, people who continue to engage in stirring up interracial hatred, in inciting adversity between religions, in establishing all kinds of barriers, in viewing people of different cultures and ethnicities as enemies, will in consequence isolate themselves from the entire human race. In fact, not only will they forsake the global family, they will bring misfortune to the entire world.

I would like to appeal to the outstanding youth of the world to harbour the aspiration for a sustainable world peace, and in each of your domains of expertise, dedicate your skills and knowledge towards the realization of this aspiration. Make the universal happiness of all people the goal of your life, and intimately feel that we, the human race, are all in the same boat. Exercise the wisdom and compassion of seeking commonality while preserving differences in facing this complex and diverse world.

We need to call upon the youth of the world to learn to embrace the benefits of diversity, to respect differences, to understand the strengths and weaknesses of each other, to help each other overcome our weaknesses, to learn from each other's strengths, and to work together to realize and protect sustainable peace in this world.

I am already an old monk. I have lived through the Second World War. I have also personally witnessed and heard of the tragedies of countless major and minor conflicts and wars that happened in different times and places. I hope that in the twenty-first century, due to the efforts of our youth, the world will forever be freed from the conflicts and wars of the human race. Let us all pray and give our blessings to this aspiration!

Lastly, I give blessings to all youth leaders to learn and grow together during our conference with its theme of "Joy, Harmony, Peace." The hope of the twenty-first century is on your shoulders.

July 23, 2004



World Youth Peace Summit Conference

世界青年和平高峰會 台北論壇





WHAT REMAINS

**What remains of this graveyard lush and manicured?
What remains of tombstones rinsed blank?
What remains of lilacs and birdsong?
What remains of passenger planes passing through?
What remains of their exhaust trails?
What remains of pines shedding nuts and needles?
What remains of a hornet's sting?
What remains of this breeze that roots me in the cemetery?
What remains of you, friend?
What remains of your touch?
What remains of memories?
What remains of a mausoleum?
What remains of the figures in its stained glass?
What remains, friend, of the ground we stand on?
What remains of dissolution?**

—Mike Morical

A Spiritual Cleansing

Retreat Report by E.C.

The retreat took place from 7/14 to 7/21, 2001, at Ling Quan Zen Temple, because the Dharma Drum's own site had not been completed. It was led by Master Sheng Yen ("Shifu").

Ever since I came back from the Zen Meditation camp, I've felt an unexpected peacefulness. I have learned to control my temper, to be more patient, and to let things go more easily. I realize that there is no use working up anger or frustration, for it would only make things worse. Attending this week-long camp has allowed me to view things from a different perspective, which I know will influence me for a lifetime.

At this camp we were not allowed to talk, read, or wander off into the mountains. We were to have no kind of human contact with anyone; it was purely a time to spend with ourselves. We were told to try not to look at things or people, for it would distract our minds and ignite random thoughts. This was a time when we were to attempt thinking about nothing—to clear our minds in order to reflect on things impartially.

Our meditation sessions were intervals of 20-30 minutes each. It might not sound like a long time, but when your knees hurt, your back aches and your feet are numb, twenty minutes feels more like an hour. We were taught to use a "breathing method," where we focus on the "feeling" of breathing. We

weren't controlling our breathing, for our brain does that on its own. They told us to "feel," "perceive," "sense," the air going in and out of our lungs, our nostrils; feel our bodies go up and down as the air comes in and goes out. This was the feeling of being alive. We weren't using our minds and "thinking" about breathing, but were using our bodies and "feeling" our bodies breath.

It was hard. The first step was to clear the mind, which for me was like asking me to speak Arabic or Hindi—impossible. The first time I actually entered a meditative state was when I could no longer withstand the pain in my knees. I thought of nothing but the fact that I needed to STOP thinking about the pain. Eventually, I started to feel my breathing. And from my breathing I expanded to feel other areas of my body—my legs, my feet, my back, my shoulders, my neck. I even faced the pain in my knees, which was then diminished because I wasn't trying to resist the pain. After this session, I sincerely felt the joy of absolute serenity.

I felt so calm and satisfied. It was like the sun coming out after a storm. I realized that clearing the mind wasn't stopping all thought, but was enabling an internal cleansing. I realized that we often think about things by placing ourselves in the middle and only seeing from our own perspectives. We aren't seeing things for what they are, but what they seem to us to be. Clearing the mind meant disregarding

previous learned opinions or facts and viewing from an unbiased standpoint. And meditation assisted us in the process of reaching such clarity.

Meditation helps us to see more clearly. However, it was only one part of the program. The other part was Shifu's speeches. He spoke of the philosophy of Buddhism. He told us what wisdom is and what it takes to obtain wisdom. He emphasized the attitude of detachment from oneself. This is the mindset of disregarding yourself, your positions, your feelings, and dealing with things objectively. However, I also realized detaching from yourself does not mean forgetting yourself.

Shifu talked about knowing yourself, accepting yourself, and most importantly, respecting yourself. We are all born different. We should exploit our strengths in order to distinguish ourselves from others; we must be aware of our weaknesses and accept the fact that we are not perfect. At one point during the retreat, I felt that I knew enough, that I was mature enough and wise for my age. But then I realized that this thought itself was not mature and wise. I was not being honest with myself. It was like I was trying to make myself think I was good enough so I didn't have to take in everything Shifu said. A person can never know everything; a person can never be good enough.

And finally, self-respect. Shifu emphasized the importance of knowing our worth and how to think for ourselves, live for ourselves. At first, I thought this meant we should be selfish and I fully agreed. Living in the States for two years has really taught me how to think for myself and protect myself because if I don't, no one else will. But later, Shifu also said to not be selfish; he talked about compassion.

I was confused—confused for a few days straight, too. Then I realized that he meant for us to have a big heart, while also having wisdom. Helping others to the extent that people take it for granted is being foolish, not kind. Shifu said that when we help others we need to think whether the deed will truly help them in the long run and is not just for short-term pleasure.



This cleared up my confusion, for I have always felt it hard to find a balance between being nice and being selfish. I remember when I first arrived in the States I liked to help others, hoping they would like me just because I helped them. I am just naturally kind-hearted. But then I realized it was like trying to fill a bottomless pit. I was hurt and didn't know why people didn't appreciate me for my kindness. Later I adopted the method of the other extreme; I became too selective in whom I was nice to.

Not until earlier this year did I nearly strike a balance. I started to live for myself and think for myself, and not hide my warmth just because other people were cold. The imbalance, however, was that I had developed a profit-oriented mind. I found myself thinking, "What can I get out of this person?" I didn't use people without trying to give something in return, but I felt bad about myself for thinking this question at all. I hated the feeling. But now, after hearing Shifu's words of wisdom, I feel refreshed, like someone reminded me of my own previous beliefs. I know there is still some distance to reach the perfect position, but as of now, I feel happy and peaceful.

Another point that Shifu made was, "Wise people don't let bad situations trouble them, because they know how to make bad things good." Wise people know how to make the most of things. It is like optimism, but it also made me think of passiveness. If anything can be good, then why bother working hard for something we want? Later, however, Shifu cleared this up by adding, "Wise people don't do things they will later regret." In Chinese this is called *dwei bu chi zi ji*, apologizing to yourself.

On the fourth day of the camp, I still didn't know how to meditate and I wasn't taking in Shifu's sayings because I felt they were trying to brainwash us into becoming Buddhists. I was arrogant and self-content. I was miserable, I hated the camp and wanted to go home. The thought of running away actually crossed my mind.

Then I realized that if I went through the whole week without learning all that I could have, I'd feel sorry for myself. I'd KNOW that I

hadn't done my best. I'd be able to hide it and tell others the camp was useless, but I would still KNOW that I hadn't tried hard enough. Thereafter I set a goal for myself to humbly learn what they were trying to teach us. I approached everything with an open mind without forgetting my own thoughts. I did learn how to meditate, and I did absorb the teachings. I do feel that I made the most of my experience.

The pieces all fit together. Wise people do things they later won't regret, they work hard and live for themselves without disregarding the welfare of others. They build good relationships with the people around them and accept the nature of humans as non-self-sufficient, dependent animals. Wise people are happy because they know how to bring out the good from the bad; they are able to see things with clarity and not be influenced by external affairs. Wise people aren't perfect, but they know how to prevent bad situations, and accept what they can't prevent.

After only one week I received all this intellectual nourishment. I feel blessed and fortunate to have had this opportunity to open my eyes and appreciate what I have. I know I still have a long way to go, but I'll just take it one step at a time. All I can do is live the moment and learn as I go. The present is what matters, for breathing yesterday and breathing tomorrow is irrelevant, it's being able to breathe NOW that really matters. And NOW, I've finished this report, and the next step for me is to email it to all you wonderful people.

Hugs and kisses for all of you. Thanks for being such extraordinary people.

The Past

News from the Chan Meditation Center and the DDMBA Worldwide

Master Sheng Yen Tours Singapore, Australia and Switzerland

On April 15, Master Sheng Yen began an intensive 3-1/2 week tour to 4 cities around the world, spreading the Buddhadharma to executives and government officials in

Singapore, academics and psychologists in Sydney and Melbourne, Australia, and Silent Illumination practitioners at a seven-day retreat in Beatenberg, Switzerland.



Singapore: Small Nation, Big Heart

A three-day Dharma Drum Mountain executive retreat was held for the first time in a country outside of Taiwan. It was well-attended by over 80 government officials and executives heralding from multinational companies of different sectors. During these three days, Master Sheng Yen gave careful instructions on the method of practice and how to apply it to our daily lives. Many of the participants were touched by the simplicity of his teaching and his dedication.

Master Sheng Yen also gave a two-part lecture series on "How to overcome life's roadblocks" to an audience of 6000-8000. In both lectures, the venue was filled to capacity as many Singaporeans came eagerly to listen to Master Sheng Yen's words of wisdom.

It was a formidable accomplishment for both the Singapore Dharma Drum Mountain chapter and Kong Meng San Phor Karak See Monastery to organize a large-scale series of successful events.

Sydney: Academic Exchange

This was Master Sheng Yen's first visit to Australia. In Sydney, by invitation of the Department of Studies in Religion from the University of Sydney, Shifu gave a speech on "The Perspective of Chan on Simultaneous Liberation: The Relationship of Mind Liberation to Wisdom Liberation." Approximately two hundred people, including professors and students of philosophy and linguistics, and the cultural research departments of the University of Sydney, as well as local monastics and lay practitioners attended Shifu's speech.

Master Sheng Yen then proceeded to sign a Memorandum of Academic Exchange between the Department of Studies in Religion of the University of Sydney and the Chung Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies (CHIBS) with Professor June Sinclair, Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Shifu also gave a public lecture on Buddhism and Protecting the Environment at the University of Australia to an audience of about 800 people. Many youths attended this lecture. On the invitation of Mr. Graeme Lyall, Master Sheng Yen participated in an interfaith dialogue between the representatives of the various religions in Sydney. The audience filled the small auditorium to overcapacity.

Melbourne: Psychology and Interfaith Exchange

In Melbourne, by invitation of the Australian Psychology Society, Master Sheng Yen gave a keynote speech at their national annual meeting at Deakin University to some 120 members. A question and answer session followed in which several psychologists asked Shifu about the relationship between Buddhist teachings and the work that psychologists are involved in as well as Buddhist views on dealing with death.

A public lecture on Chan and our Daily Life was given at the Mannington Function Center to an audience of about 900 people. In this lecture, Shifu clarified that Chan is not a mystical teaching. It is based on concepts and methods of practice applicable to our daily lives. The Mayor of Melbourne and the Legislative MP were also present at



this lecture. The Dharma Drum Mountain Melbourne chapter also organized an interfaith symposium held at the Park Hyatt Hotel. Prominent interfaith proponent Dr. Desmond Cahill moderated this symposium and many high level interfaith leaders from diverse religions of Melbourne were part of the panel to discuss "Faith in Troubled Times: Our Path to Inner Peace." The several themes of the symposium included how to increase understanding between faiths, the development of a global ethics, and the responsibilities of religious leaders to encourage more interfaith interactions.

Switzerland: Chan Buddhism and Daily Life

On the last leg of Master Sheng Yen's global tour, he went to Beatenberg, Switzerland to lead a seven-day Silent Illumination retreat

on the invitation of Fred Von Allmen of the Beatenberg Meditation Center. Prior to the retreat, about 170 people came to listen to Master Sheng Yen's public lecture on "Chan in Our Daily Lives" at the Medienzentrum Schulwarte Bern in the capital city of Switzerland on April 30, 2004. The following day, an informal question and answer session was conducted with Master Sheng Yen at the Beatenberg Meditation Center. In these two separate lectures, many Europeans enthusiastically asked Shifu questions about the Chan tradition and Buddhism in general.

The seven-day Silent Illumination retreat was held in the midst of a three-day snowstorm, obstructing the picturesque view of the Interlaken Lake from the retreat center in the town of Beatenberg. About 90 participants from 17 countries came to join in the retreat. Most were teachers of meditation and

advanced practitioners who had 10 to 20 years of meditation experience. They felt that having a Buddhist teacher with Chan lineage teaching Chan Buddhism in a country where Buddhism is neither historically nor culturally prominent helped them deepen their practice immensely. Concepts were taught to help them gain right views of Buddhism in general and deepen their understanding of their practice. In this retreat, Master Sheng Yen verified and confirmed that 10 participants had attained the unification of body and mind and 2 participants had seen the nature of emptiness.

Throughout these travels, lectures and retreats, one thing was certainly evident: the auditoriums were filled to capacity. This demonstrated that meditation and Buddhism is gaining prominence in many societies and that spirituality is still prevalent today.

Celebration of Buddha's Birthday

Master Sheng-yen and Master Jen Chun welcomed us all in a celebration of the 2628th birthday of the Buddha on May 23, 2004, at the Chan Meditation Center in Elmhurst. Many members and sangha from the Bodhi Monastery in New Jersey who accompanied Master Jen Chun to the celebration also joined us. The morning opened with an interesting history of the Buddha's life given by Rikki Asher and Haidee Lee, followed by Guo Yuan Fa Shi leading the Incense Prayer, the chanting of the Heart Sutra and receiving the blessings of the Three Jewels.

Master Jen Chun then offered a talk through which he reminded us that respect for ourselves and for others is of utmost importance

in the teachings of the Buddha. Through a conscious attitude of respect, we limit the large ego self and decrease our pride and arrogance, giving rise to bodhimind. We then made the offering to the sangha and midday offering before proceeding to lunch. Once again, the chefs and kitchen volunteers put forth their very best work in providing us with a delicious variety of vegetarian dishes.

Rikki Asher and Haidee Lee gave a wide-ranging midday talk covering the histories of Buddhism and the Chan Center. They also offered a concise summary of a number of Master Sheng Yen's key advisories concerning the protection of the environment, the stabilization of the mind, steps in handling problems, and keys to attaining a peaceful mind, just to name a few.

After lunch, Master Sheng Yen gave a Dharma talk, reminding us that the Dharma teachings can be summarized as the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path. He explained the essential points of these teachings, and focused on the benefits of our practice to others and ourselves. Shifu continued on with the Maha Prajnaparamita Sastra to ensure that we understood, within the overall cultivation of the Bodhisattva Path, the critical importance of cultivating the mind of non-abiding. This is familiar to us within the concept of "Right View". Shifu closed with a practical summary of how a careful cultivation of the Eightfold Path solves problems in human life.

One of the problems it appears to have solved quite well is that of composing a splendid entertainment program for the Buddha's Birthday; it gets better and better with each passing year. Bob Weick and Mrs. Fanny Wu emceed the complete program with their



characteristic good humor and enthusiasm. The Chan Hall was beautifully decorated and shining.

We were thrilled with a rousing drum performance by the Taiko Tides. It was really quite amazing to watch them play with great energy and precision. The talent show by the Dharma Kids showed off their gifts on the piano, violin, voice and strings. We were delighted with the performances of Jason Chen, Sara Chee, Vivan Liu, Kelly Lee, Annie Yueh, Bernard Liu, Jamie Chan and Jimmy Chan.

The adults were left wishing they had practiced more when they were young because the kids were great one and all. We were so proud of them, and Guo Chen Fa Shi awarded each one a certificate of appreciation from the Chan Meditation Center.

Continuing the musical entertainment, the Dharma Drum Mountain & CMC Choir encouraged us to hum along on a number of familiar songs. Earlier in the program, the male-only group performed a resonant chanting of Praise To Amitabha Buddha.

The always graceful Chi-Wah Chow reminded us through a fan dance that we should maintain a young perspective, just like the flowers in the sunset. To great applause and admiration, she let us know that she is three months older than Shifu. The afternoon's entertainment drew to a close under the leadership of Master Chih-Young Lin of the Natural Chinese Martial Arts Academy with a truly expert sampling of a variety of martial arts styles.

We extend out warmest thanks to all of the volunteers and participants who made the 2628th birthday celebration a wonderful day for us all to enjoy.

Dharma Gathering

On May 14, there was a Dharma gathering at the Chan Meditation Center to welcome Shi Fu back to New York.

Having just returned from conducting a retreat in Switzerland, Master Sheng Yen gave a lecture to about 50 people on the role of doubt in Chan practice. He reminded the group that if a Chan practitioner has no doubt or questions in his or her mind, it is difficult for the practice to take hold and be focused. When one keeps probing and creates a burning sense of doubt, enlightenment comes naturally. Shifu recounted the enlightenment experience of Dong Shan Liang Jie to illustrate this point.

He also asked his translator, Rebecca Li, if she prefers herself now or at some time in the past, reminding everyone that this Rebecca will soon be gone. Shifu said that the self of every moment is you, but that is not who you are; enlightenment occurs when you

experience yourself in that way. He concluded with a huatou: "What's that?"

The crowd, which included many new faces, had light snacks and chatted after the lecture. Everyone was happy to see Shifu and each other.

The Asia Pacific Buddhist Translation Group

Founded by Rev. Guo Jun with the blessing of Master Sheng Yen early this year, the Asia Pacific Translation Group is taking up the work of making Master Sheng Yen's many works in Chinese available in English.

The Reverend felt that the lack of English material internationally on Chinese Buddhism was appalling, and that there was a pressing need for a translation group to continue with the translation of Master Sheng Yen's books, especially those on the topic of Chan meditation.

The purpose of setting up APBTG is to co-ordinate the work of various individuals in the Asia Pacific Region to work in teams in order to realize the objective of spreading Chan Buddhism. The translation team in Sydney was given the task of co-ordinating with the various translators, editors and translation teams in the region, providing support and resources as required, as well as liaising with DDM Publishing in the US and Taiwan.

Due to the continuous support of various translators and English editors, our translation team has just completed the translation of the free distribution booklets "Meaning of

Life,” “Buddhadharma in Daily Life,” and “Chan Practice and Belief,” as well as an address given by Master Sheng Yen last year at Columbia University titled “Eye of the Storm.”

Guo Yuan Fa Shi Blesses New San Francisco Chapter...

Guo Yuan Fa Shi traveled to San Francisco for the opening of the new SF chapter of the DDMBA on July 17. He led the opening ceremonies in the morning, gave a Dharma talk in the afternoon, and led a one-day retreat at their new headquarters from 9 - 5 the following day.

The new San Francisco affiliate is at 1842 El Camino Real, Burlingame, California, 94010.

...And Lectures at Bodhi Monastery

On July 14 Guo Yuan Fa Shi was invited to the Bodhi Monastery in New Jersey.

In the afternoon, he presented Dharma Drum's Eight-Form Moving Meditation, a system of physical exercise and meditation in motion developed by Master Sheng Yen to help people living busy and stressful lives to realize the benefits of Chan meditation.

That evening, he gave a lecture on Prajna (wisdom) from the perspective of Chan, and then led a question and answer session.

About 40 people attended. Bodhi Monastery held a week-long Dharma retreat from July 9 through July 16.



The Future

*Retreats, classes and
other upcoming events.*

Chan Retreats

Chan retreats are opportunities for serious practitioners to deepen their practice and receive guidance from resident teachers. Retreats are held either at the Chan Meditation Center in Queens (CMC) or at the Dharma Drum Retreat Center (DDRC) in Pine Ridge, New York.

One-day Chan Retreat at CMC

Saturday, October 2, 9 am – 5 pm

Nine-day Huatou Retreat (DDRC)

Friday, November 26, 6 pm –
Sunday, December 5, 10 am

Seven-day Silent Illumination Retreat (DDRC)

Sunday, December 26, 6 pm –
Sunday, January 2, 10 am

Chan Practice

Monday Night Chanting

Every Monday, 7:30 – 9 pm
Devotional chanting of Amitabha Buddha.

Tuesday Night Sitting Group

Every Tuesday, 7 – 9:45 pm
Periods of sitting meditation alternating with yoga, walking meditation, readings, discussion, and chanting the Heart Sutra.

Saturday Sitting Group

Every Saturday, 9 am – 3 pm
Half-hour periods of sitting meditation alternating with yoga or walking meditation.

Sunday Open House

Every Sunday (except April 25)
10:00 am – 11:00 am Group Meditation
11:00 am – 1:00 pm Dharma Talk
1:00 pm – 1:45 pm Vegetarian Lunch
1:45 pm – 2:45 pm Chanting
1:45 pm – 2:30 pm “Ask the Abbot”

NEW: Sunday Night Sitting Group

Please call 718-592-6593 for details.

Wednesday Night Sitting Group at DDRC

Please call 845-744-8114 for details.

Classes at CMC

Beginners' Meditation Classes

Two Saturdays, September 11 and 18,
9 am – 12 noon, and
Two Saturdays, October 9 and 16,
9 am – 12 noon
Pre-registration required

Beginners' Dharma Class

Three Fridays, September 24, October 1 and
8, 7 pm – 9 pm, Pre-registration required

Taijiquan Classes

Thursdays, 7:30 – 9:00 pm,
with instructor David Ngo, \$25/month

Yoga

Saturdays, September 4, 11, 18; October 2, 9,
16, 23, 30; November 13, 20; December 4, 11,
3:30 – 5 pm, with instructor Rikki Asher.
\$100 for 12 classes; \$12/class

Taking Refuge in the Three Jewels

Transmitted by Chan Master Sheng Yen
Sundays, November 7, 21 and December 12,
9 – 10 am

Public Lectures by Chan Master Sheng Yen

Columbia University
Saturday, November 6, 3 – 5 pm

Chan Meditation Center
Sunday, November 7, 11 am – 12:30 pm

Special Event

Dharma Gathering
Friday, November 5, 6:30 – 9:30 pm

"Zen and Inner Peace"

Chan Master Sheng Yen on TV
WNYE (25) every Saturday, 12 midnight



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.

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Mar de Jade Oceanfront Retreat Center
Chacala, Nayarit, Mexico
Contact: Laura del Valle MD
USA phone 800-257-0532
Mexico phone 01-800-505-8005
Email: info@mardejade.com
Website: http://www.mardejade.com
Daily meditation; regular retreats;
2005 residential period

Europe:

Croatia

Dharmaaloka Buddhist Center
Dordiceva 23
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Tel/Fax: ++385 1 481 00 74
Email: info@dharmaloka.org
http://www.dharmaloka.org
Teacher: Zarko Andricevic
Ongoing program of study and practice,
including courses in Buddhism and Chan
meditation, meditation group meetings,
and retreats.

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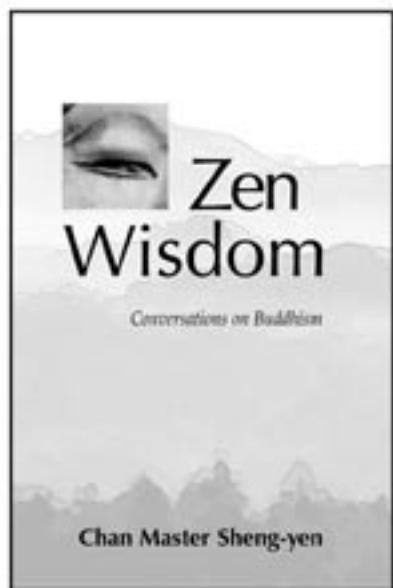
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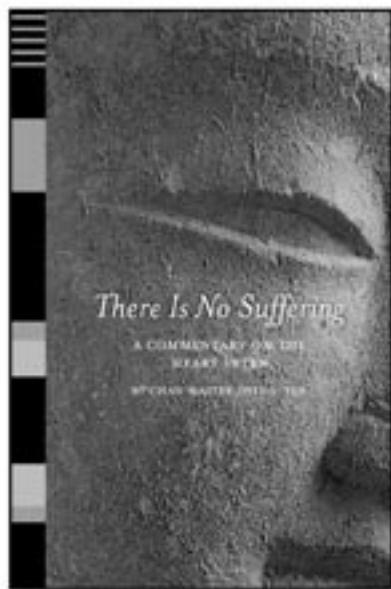


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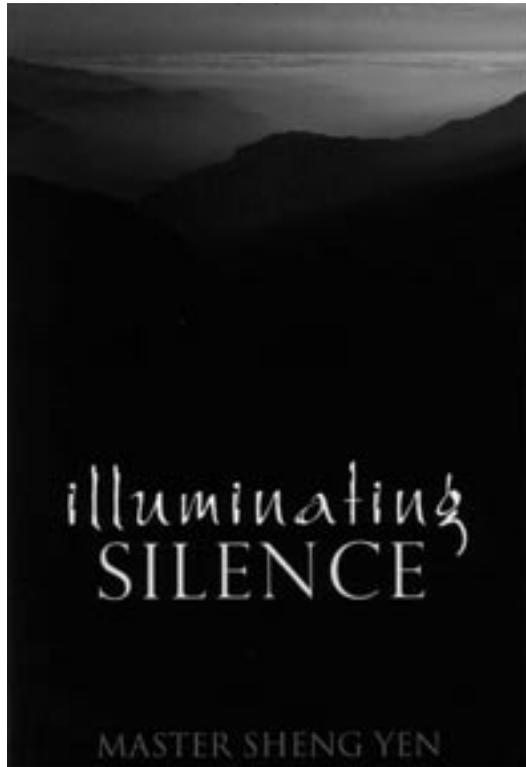


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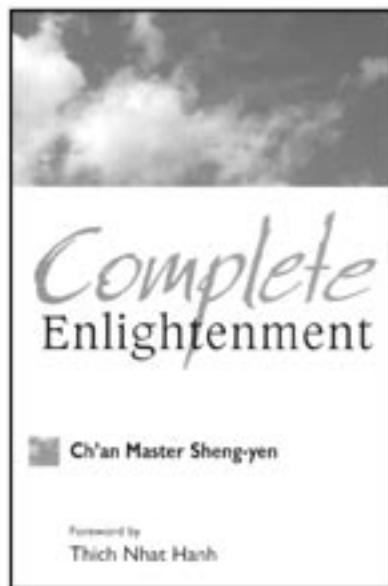
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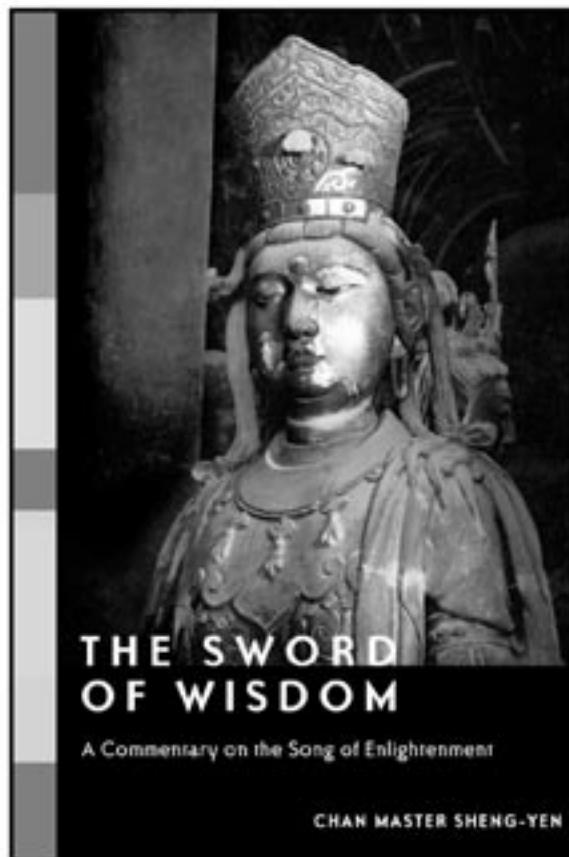
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