

Chan 禪 Magazine

Winter 2006



Chan Meditation Center

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“One can only understand ultimate emptiness, or emptiness as reality, through direct personal experience, wherein one realizes that all dharmas, whether mental or physical, are both empty *and* existent. In other words, existence is identical to emptiness. If one has no attachments and makes no discriminations based on a self, then one recognizes that every dharma exists *and* is empty. One recognizes that existence and emptiness are really the same thing. One further recognizes that there really is no such thing as existence or emptiness. This is the true emptiness of the Mahayana.”

– Chan Master Sheng Yen, from his commentary on the Heart Sutra, *There Is No Suffering*.

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Founder/Teacher

Chan Master Ven. Dr. Sheng Yen

Editor-in-chief

David Berman

Coordinator

Virginia Tan

Photography

John Feng, Jerry Roach

Contributing editors

Ernie Heau, Kevin Mathewson, Virginia Tan, Wei Tan, Sheila Sussman

Contributors

Rikki Asher, Lynda Holland, Jeffrey Kung, Rebecca Li, Charlotte Mansfield, Mike Morical, Bruce Rickenbacker, Wei Tan, Tan Yee Wong (Chang Ji Shi)

Administrator

Guo Chii Shi

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From The Editor

It was not quite a year ago that I wrote about a massive assault the ocean had made on the land on the other side of the world; now it's happened here.

Hurricane Katrina, and her younger sister Rita in her wake, have absolutely devastated New Orleans, one of this country's most beautiful, most historic, and as we now know, poorest cities. Over a thousand dead, over a million displaced – not exactly the scale of destruction of last year's tsunami, but the biggest natural disaster in this nation's history, compounded by what has so far been one of this nation's most egregious failures both to prepare for and to respond to adversity.

This is what we already know, what's been widely reported. The following is some information that's been much less in the news.

While the majority of the people affected by the hurricanes are New Orleanians, the vast majority of the land affected is rural: farms, bayous, oilfields, small towns and rural communities. Gulf Coast agriculture has been absolutely destroyed – sugar cane, citrus, and soybean crops just gone; tens of thousands of head of cattle lost; toxicity from oil wells and chemical plants creating hazards that have not yet even been properly assessed. It is not yet clear when and if new crop can be planted, and that threatens not only the short-term ability of farmers and farmworkers to make ends meet, but the long-term survival of the agriculture itself. Only 20% of Louisiana farmland is owned by those that work the land, and if the landlords find that selling to developers is more profitable than

leasing to farmers, the fields will disappear, to be replaced by exurban sprawl.

And the destruction is not limited to the dry land – Louisiana's fishing and shrimping industries, which once provided the majority of this country's seafood, are virtually out of business. The boats, the docks, the infrastructure is gone, but what's worse, the damage to the fragile wetlands, already badly compromised by poor management and thoughtless development, calls future yields into question. The wetlands are the nurseries of the Gulf, and if their recovery isn't encouraged and protected, there won't be any fishing to do.

Mardis Gras is only three months away, and although it won't be the party that made the city famous, it should create another opportunity to focus attention on New Orleans and assess how the recovery is going, as well we should. But as we grieve for the loss of color, and cuisine, and music and excitement that the culture of New Orleans has always meant, let us not forget the family farmers and fishers out of town and out of sight. Those who do disaster relief know that rural areas are always last and receive the least; those who live there do not however suffer less, and we can help by being mindful of them.

There are many agencies doing hurricane relief in the Gulf; I call your attention to the Southern Mutual Help Association. SMHA has been on the ground in Louisiana working with the rural poor for 35 years. They could use our help, and they have the expertise to make good use of 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 last 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 15

After this lecture we will take group photographs. Taking a photograph is easy; and at least you have a memento. But understanding the Dharma of the Teachings is difficult, and understanding the Dharma of Mind even harder. After giving rise to Dharma of Mind, or bodhi mind, one realizes wisdom and compassion. Wisdom is knowing how to help sentient beings and compassion is intending to deliver them from suffering. To attain bodhi mind, however, we must first renounce our own vexations. Renunciation allows us to let go of forms and let all affairs come to rest. Therefore, bodhi mind and renunciation are inextricably linked. Mahayana liberation is not just departing from one's own vexations; it is also the hope and intention to help other sentient beings find liberation as well. But first, we need renunciation to help us to depart from vexations.

How do we cultivate bodhi mind and renunciation? One way is to make the Four Great Vows, as we do every morning. The first vow, to save sentient beings, exemplifies bodhi mind. The second vow, to cut off vexations, is renunciation. The third vow, to learn Dharma approaches, is using the Dharma of the Teachings to develop the bodhi mind and renunciation. And if we practice the teachings, we will ultimately realize the fourth vow, to attain buddhahood. To help everyone remember, we should now recite the Four Great Vows.

[Recitation of the Four Great Vows follows.]

I vow to deliver innumerable sentient beings.

I vow to cut off endless vexations.

I vow to pursue limitless approaches to Dharma.

I vow to attain supreme buddhahood.

When we let go of vexations, we create less bad karma for ourselves, and if we create less

bad karma, we will have less karmic retribution. How do we create bad karma? We do it by hurting others with our actions and our words. Therefore, to avoid the effects of karma, it is best to renounce actions and speech that harm ourselves as well as others. To help us renounce, we adhere to the precepts and practice samadhi. The precepts restrain our bodily and verbal behavior, and samadhi restrains our mental afflictions. When we practice samadhi, the environment will not tempt us so much and our mind will be more stable. As a result we do not cause as many problems for ourselves and for others. So, precepts and samadhi are precisely the methods for cultivating renunciation.

The five basic precepts regulate our bodily and verbal behavior and following them will prevent us from causing harm to other beings and to society. The first precept is not to kill, and this includes not doing violence to others. The second precept is not to steal other people's property or possessions. The third precept is not engaging in sexual relations outside of one's spouse. The fourth precept, no lying, also includes no vulgar speech, no slandering, and no idle gossip. This last category is linked to samadhi, because if you talk about meaningless things, your mind is likely to be scattered. The fifth precept is no taking intoxicants and drugs. In some cultures, it is difficult not to take alcohol at all, but if you're doing spiritual practice, it's best if you don't drink.

There is a story about a layman in Shakyamuni Buddha's time who had a drinking habit but was otherwise an upright person. One day he was very thirsty and saw a bowl of water on a table. He drank it down before realizing that it was alcohol and became

drunk. He then forgot about the precept and drank even more. He next wanted some food, so he captured a chicken wandering on his property, killed it, and ate it. As it turned out it was a neighbor's chicken. The neighbor's wife came to this man's house to ask if he had seen the chicken. He told her he had not and then forced himself sexually on her. The wife ran home and told her husband about what happened, and he went to the authorities. He also went to Shakyamuni Buddha's and said, "Look at what your disciple has done."

So this man, starting with one drink, broke the precept against drinking, against stealing, against killing, against lying, and against sexual misconduct. So, we can see that drinking alcohol can have very negative consequences.

So, let's go take a picture now.

Translator: Shifu is planning on giving this painting of the Buddha behind him to the Wujimen Center. It was a gift to him by a famous Taiwanese artist who is also a disciple. Tomorrow we will have a small ceremony in which Shifu will transfer the painting to Sasha.

Sheng Yen: I would like to ask now, how many people here are affiliated with Wujimen? Thirty-six? There is this Chinese gongfu novel that I have not read, but it has 36 knights who are excellent gongfu fighters. Maybe we can call you the Thirty-six Immortal Knights of Wujimen.

I have introduced the methods of Chan in a very brief but systematic way. I have described the basic practices of Chan, and also the two main methods of the two major schools: the

silent illumination of Caodong, and the huatou of Linji. Furthermore, I have talked about seeing one's self-nature and what that involves. I have outlined this all rather clearly. You are all excellent students with a great ability to understand the Dharma. Although we speak different languages, you have been very good at absorbing the teachings.

During personal interview, someone here asked me about confirmation and Dharma transmission. I would like to explain these two issues. Confirmation of an enlightenment experience involves the Dharma of the Mind, but the master and the disciple should know each other and discuss the experience, and their minds should be in accord or somehow coincide. It is like two hands coming together perfectly. The minds of the two people should somehow match and it is only under these conditions that the master will give this confirmation. I should add that the master might know a little bit more about whether there is a matching of minds than the disciple. This matching or tallying between master and the disciple can be also likened to an imprint of one's hand. If you make an imprint in plaster of your hand and the other person's hand fits perfectly into this imprint, this would be a metaphor for a tallying, or matching of minds.

The process by which a master gives confirmation to a disciple is called yinke in Chinese Chan, and inka in Japanese Zen. The ordinary meaning of this word is 'confirmation,' in the sense of a seal of approval. You may have seen seal stampings on Chinese paintings. So it's like you put this seal on, and then say, "Yes, you have been confirmed." It is also called xinyin, or mind-seal. However, if you have a teacher who is not enlightened — though he or she may believe so — the

disciple who receives such a seal may not be genuinely enlightened either, and neither will be the future teachers in the line.

When I was 28, one of my teachers helped me to see self-nature. But it was not until I was about 42 that I received confirmation from my lineage master. Around that time, I returned to Taiwan from America and told my teacher that I was teaching meditation in the United States. He

said, "Well, I guess you need my confirmation now." That was how I got yinke. But I do not really care whether I have this confirmation or not, and I really don't have a personal need for it. Either way, I know that I am not yet liberated and I have to keep working hard.

As for transmission, what it mainly means is that the disciple has received permission to teach the Dharma from his or her lineage master. It is not necessarily a measure of

"CONFIRMATION OF AN ENLIGHTENMENT EXPERIENCE ...IS LIKE TWO HANDS COMING TOGETHER PERFECTLY. THE MINDS OF THE TWO PEOPLE [MASTER AND DISCIPLE] SHOULD SOMEHOW MATCH, AND IT IS ONLY UNDER THESE CONDITIONS THAT THE MASTER WILL GIVE THIS CONFIRMATION."

one's level of enlightenment. So, transmission is basically permission from one's teacher to teach the Dharma. Please be clear, only the Dharma of Teachings can be transmitted. Dharma of Mind can never be transmitted. However, even when transmitting the Dharma of the Teachings, it is best if the disciple has at least seen the nature. It is not an essential condition to teach, but it is much preferable if the disciple has seen the nature. A teacher who has not seen self-nature can still teach the methods and principles of Buddhism, but will not be able to confirm a disciple. If a teacher has not seen the nature but one of his or her students has, this is of course a good thing. However, a problem can occur if students try to confirm their own experience. In principle a practitioner can know whether they have seen the nature, but in actual practice they should not confirm themselves. If the disciple has no vexations, has a compassionate vow, and has bodhi mind, then the disciple can know that. But in practice, without an enlightened teacher confirming a disciple, anyone who thinks they are enlightened can go around acting like it and saying so. As a result there would be too many false teachers.

Thus, there is a more advanced transmission in which a disciple is given permission not only to teach the Dharma, but also to confirm others. There should be four criteria for such a transmission. First of all the disciple should have seen their self-nature. Second, the disciple should have a great compassionate vow, in other words, possess bodhi mind. Third, the disciple should have a mind of renunciation, which means being pure in behavior. Fourth, the disciple practices very diligently, especially the three studies of precepts, samadhi, and wisdom. Of course, as a

precondition, even necessary to seeing self-nature, the disciple must hold correct views of the Buddhadharma. Without this, one may be able to achieve unified mind, but one cannot experience self-nature.

Maybe all of this isn't very important, or people are not so interested in this issue.

Or, maybe many are interested, but find it not all that important at this point. I recommend that you not be anxious about getting confirmation. Instead, use your practice, energy, and vows, and channel that into the method. You should also help and encourage others to study the Dharma. What's most important is to use the Dharma of the Teachings to help yourself in your personal relations and problems. This is what the teachings of the Dharma can be used for, and it should have priority over getting confirmed. If someone receives confirmation but can't seem to manage their own life and has trouble in their relationships, what is the use of getting confirmed? In fact, other people will look at this person and say, "Is this the way Chan practitioners are?" Such a person will cause damage to Buddhism. This is actually because this person lacks wisdom and compassion.

We have time for one question.

Question: (Inaudible, but having to do with the nature of nirvana.)

Sheng Yen: Nirvana is a state that can be described as perfect quiescence. In this state, there is no arising and no extinguishing, no birth and no death. There is also a distinction between the nirvana of a shravaka, and the nirvana of a Buddha. In the case of the shravaka, one passes into nirvana and does

not have another birth. In the nirvana of a Buddha, the Buddha is diffused throughout all worlds and all time. At the same time, we cannot say this occurs within time and space. Otherwise that Buddha would just be an ordinary person. So, a Buddha who enters nirvana is diffused throughout time and space but cannot be said to be in time and space.

Whether one achieves the nirvana of a shravaka (arhat) or a Buddha, both nirvanas have two aspects. The first aspect is, after having achieved nirvana there is a period of time in which this shravaka or Buddha is still in the world, but vexations neither arise nor pass away. There are simply no more vexations for this shravaka or Buddha.

But for both the shravaka and the Buddha, there comes a time when the physical body dies, and after this, the shravaka or Buddha

will enter the nirvana in which there is no birth or death, in other words, has left behind samsara. After transcending samsara the shravaka has left time and space never to return, and remains in nirvana. But after nirvana, a Buddha may enter into any time and any space in order to help sentient beings. So, to distinguish these two nirvanas, we can say that the shravaka's nirvana is simply called 'nirvana,' and the Buddha's nirvana is called 'mahānirvana,' in Sanskrit, meaning 'great nirvana.'

This concludes my lectures for this retreat. I've talked about a very large scope of things, from our existence in the world of birth and death, to a stage when birth and death cease to exist. So it is interesting that we got this question at the very end. It was a good question to have come up at this time.



In white winter snow is falling.
Why wraps itself in emptiness
And a little this.

I would advise wiping the dust.
It will never more
Stay on the black wall.

– Chang Zhao

Warnings and Encouragements

By *Chan Master Zhongfeng Mingben*

Translation by *Ocean Cloud*

Zhongfeng Mingben (1262 – 1323) was an eminent Chan Master of the Linji lineage in the Yuan Dynasty. He was a student of Chan Master Gaofeng Yuanmiao (1239 – 1295) who entered into the mountains when the Mongols invaded the country. Gaofeng was the protagonist of the famous gongan, “Do you have mastery of yourself when you are in a dreamless sleep?” Zhongfeng was one of very few to receive transmission from Gaofeng; after his Master’s death, he traveled extensively, calling himself the “dweller of the illusory abode.”

Ocean Cloud is a group of Master Sheng Yen’s disciples whose translations of classics of Chan literature have appeared regularly in Chan Magazine.

True Mind

Brothers! It is because you have not generated the true mind that you have not exhausted all contrivances and return time and time again for thousands of lifetimes receiving myriad retributions. What do we mean by the “true mind”? It is that which arises [spontaneously] without thinking or intention, no matter what one encounters. For example, as soon as someone reviles you, anger immediately bursts out. Right away everything – the state of the body and mind, all that you see and hear, and the very functioning of your awareness is engulfed by anger, even to the point that you forget all about food and sleep. Anger fills your dreams, and some even carry this hatred and enmity to the end of their lives. Well, anger is but one of the eighty thousand afflictions. The rest are all the same. In fact, these afflictions mutually influence each other, intertwining into birth and death, flowing forth into infinity.

For those who cultivate the Way and aspire to resolve this very affair [of birth and death], make it so that as soon as you hear the words “birth and death,” you react [to them] immediately as if someone is reviling you. Spontaneously, without any contrivances and thinking, let the words fill up your very bosom. If you are not able to penetrate to sudden enlightenment, do not give up until you die. If you have such an aspiration, there will be no need to worry that this great affair cannot be resolved.

Earnestness

Practitioners of old had [profound] faith in the Path, their view well grounded, their understanding of the principles clear, their minds meticulous, their aspirations unwavering. In their practice and study, even hundreds of obstacles and failures could not sway their intentions. Not only were their intentions



Portrait of Chan Master Zhongfeng Mingben,
woodcut, reprinted by gracious permission
of Gold Summit Monastery.

immovable, all those obstacles and failures became means to refine their aspirations and strength. That is why they were able to attain realization rapidly.

In light of this, the circumstances and conditions we encounter are not inherently auspicious or adverse. It all depends on whether our hearts are genuinely on the Path or not. If our hearts were genuinely on the Path, then a household life would be the same as a left-home life, and adversity and loss would be the same as propitiousness and gain. All of our ancestors who had profound realizations emerged from trials, toil, and hardship. Reflect on this!

The Lure of Profit and the Way

There are people who live as servants. They toil and exhaust themselves, not daring to stay idle. When they commit even a slight error, they will be angrily scolded and even whipped – no punishment is spared. However, you don't see them run away in disgust. How can they disregard the suffering caused by anger and enmity so easily? Well, it's none other than the lure of profit and sustenance. They worry that if they react to the [mistreatment], they will be driven away from the household and thus lose their means of survival. As a result, they willingly accept the mistreatment of anger and enmity in exchange for profit and sustenance.

You who cultivate the Way! How easily you regress and fall back into laziness when you encounter ever so slight an [adverse] situation and condition! To compare the Way and the lure of profit is like comparing heaven and earth. And yet how earnestly people run after profit and how half-heartedly they seek

the Way! You should awaken to what I am saying here to encourage yourself.

Effort

Confucian classics say, "When heaven is about to bestow a great responsibility on a person, he or she will first be put through the trial of hardship of the mind, [tests of] aspiration, physical toil, and deprivation of bodily nourishment." Well, the supreme great path of Bodhi is much more than just a great responsibility. The saint in India (the Buddha Sakyamuni) gave up his lives for kalpas to strive for the fruit of the Way. His bones from all those lifetimes, if piled up, would be as high as Mt. Sumeru; the milk he had taken as nourishment, if pooled, would be as vast as the ocean. One cannot even total the lives he has undergone in his training. And thus he exclaimed, "I do not treasure my body and life, I care only about the supreme Path."

Nowadays, when we look at the lives of those who call themselves practitioners of the Path and who shelter themselves in a quiet place free [of responsibilities], what we discover is [excess] – eating before they are hungry, sleeping before they are tired, engaging in many kinds of self-indulgences. If their demand is not met, complaints and grudges will be discharged instantly. When they hear of diligence, hard-works, and energetic effort, they cover their ears, turn around and shrink away.

Nothing in this world can be accomplished without working for it and nothing can be reaped if you do not plant the seeds. Consider the [great masters] in whose footsteps we tread. Even possessing the great karmic capacities that they did, they still toiled dili-

gently before they attained thorough enlightenment. Some served in the kitchen as cooks or worked to pound rice – doing all sorts of menial work without shying away from the toil and hardship. What are we compared to them? How could we dare to live a life of indulgence, with no introspection?

In the past [the famous prime minister] Guan Zhong admonished the Lord of Qi, “To give in to pleasure and be idle is like drinking poison, do not harbor such a thought!” We would think that it is fitting for a lord or king to indulge in idle pleasure. Yet even he was admonished against just that. What about us who are gravely mindful of the great affair of birth and death?! Having disregarded physical appearances and turned away from lay clothing, we should be working as if our heads were aflame. How could we fall back into the indulgence of pleasure and idleness? When Guan Zhong talked about indulgence as poison, he was referring to it as poison to the body for just this lifetime. For us, it is a poison that can harm our wisdom lives for tens of thousands of kalpas. The harms cannot be compared.

Practice As If Our Heads Were Aflame

One of the verses we chant says, “People! Practice with great diligence and effort, as if your heads were aflame!” This is an analogy used to describe an attitude that is profound, earnest, cohesive, clear, unreserved, and straightforward – an unsurpassed serious attitude of practice. For if your head were burning, even if you were starving and food were given to you, you could not even entertain the thought of eating it without first extinguish-

ing the fire; even if you were exhausted and would have laid down to rest, you would not be able to do so without first putting out the fire on your head. To eat [when one is starving] and to rest [when one is exhausted] are most personal things that one does naturally. But without first putting out the fire, it is not possible to do so. If one has the desire for indulgence and idleness while one’s head is still aflame, one should realize that even saints and sages such as Buddhas and ancestral masters are not able to fulfill that desire.

If you can instill in your mind this need to practice diligently as if your head were aflame, spontaneously your body and mind will be well guarded and inviolable, like a well fortified castle guarded by a mighty troop. That way, the samsaric karmic stream of consciousness and the inverted delusory emotions will naturally melt away, leaving no trace to be found, with no further contrivance.

According to the regulations and rules of the monasteries, on the 8th day of each month, the residents will gather and the assembly will be gravely and sternly reminded [of this admonition]. Nowadays, those who hear of the admonition respond to it like people living in the country of Qin looking at the lands in the country of Yue, staying indifferent to whether those lands are fertile or barren, and like clay statues being exposed to the performance of the clowns and the jesters. Not only aren’t they inspired and motivated to practice diligently, they are disgusted with what they hear and see, wanting only the pleasure of idleness. Alas! This is how negligent and lazy people have become. Even if Baizhang were to come back, what could he do with them? What could he do with them?

Dharma Drum for Young People



From Monday, August 8 through Sunday, August 14, Dharma Drum Mountain Buddhist Association (DDMBA) and its subsidiary Dharma Drum for Young People (DDYP) sponsored a week of events aimed at introducing students and young professionals to Chan practice. From August 8-11 the Beginners' Zen Camp presented the essentials of meditation with a focus on observing the inner and outer worlds and how they relate. How to incorporate Buddhist practices into daily life was a central theme. Immediately following the camp, from August 11-14, a three-day meditation retreat offered a wonderful opportunity to deepen one's meditation practice in the beautiful, serene environment of the Dharma Drum Retreat Center. The program included periods of sitting and walking meditation, yoga exercises, Dharma talks and exercises in mindful living. Both events were led by Chan Meditation Center Sangha members Guo Chian Fa Shi and Chang Wu Fa Shi, and by James Yu, a longtime disciple of Chan Master Sheng Yen currently pursuing post-graduate studies at Princeton.

The following are first-person reports of the experiences of three of the approximately thirty young people who took part in the programs. The photos were contributed by Tiffany Hoya.

After signing up for a three day Zen Camp, I found that I had become the subject of too many questions from family and friends. What will they feed you? Will you be able to speak to anyone? Is it a secret cult in disguise? Will they shave your head while you're sleeping and force you to become a monk? Are you crazy? Looking back, I honestly didn't know the answer to most of these questions. However, I am happy to report I still have all of my hair and have not lost the ability to speak.

Upon arrival at the Retreat Center in upstate New York, I found myself in a serious state of nervousness and apprehension. After all, I really didn't know what to expect from these new Buddhist people I had surrounded myself with, or for that matter, what they expected from me. Having no previous knowledge about Buddhism, I was a fish out of water when it came to the customs and gentle ways that were ahead of me. Also, coming from my apartment in Manhattan, I certainly was lacking a quiet and peaceful mind. Despite my handicaps however, I was welcomed along with everyone else with a genuine sense of compassion and serene wisdom.

Throughout the retreat I was taught to be more mindful, or to rephrase, to think and find beauty and appreciation in the everyday events of my life. Being mindful while eating breakfast, for example, creates an immeasurable difference in your thoughts and feelings. You begin to appreciate what it is you are doing, and the complex series of events that led to you being able to eat that breakfast. Toast, for instance, started out with a farmer who planted a crop. After growing, caring for, and harvesting that crop, the farmer had that product transported to some sort of factory to be processed. After that step, someone had to load the packages of bread onto a truck and

drive it to the grocery store. Then, an employee of the grocery store had to stock it on the shelf for our viewing pleasure. Finally let us not forget anyone who might have gone to that grocery store to purchase the bread, and certainly you can't forget them if they toasted the bread for you. Who knew that so much thought and appreciation could be brought up by a piece of toast? Now just imagine if you put butter on it, or dare I mention jam... suffice it to say, I don't have enough time to write about all of that.

This, however, is a very small example of the things that are taught at the Retreat Center. This same principle holds true for much more significant issues and events that we face everyday. After returning from the retreat, living once again in the hustle and fast pace of Manhattan, I find myself utilizing the methods I learned, and finding a great sense of peace from them. Whether you are looking to deepen your practice and study of Zen, or if, like me, you know next to nothing about it, the Retreat Center is a great place for you to go. I personally have recommended this experience to any of my friends who would listen, and in turn would recommend it to anyone reading this article.

Encourage yourself to learn something new, delve into an incredible culture, and most importantly, become a better person. Before leaving for the retreat, a Buddhist friend told me that "practicing meditation and Zen will not solve your problems or change who you are. Rather, it will lead you to accepting yourself for who you are and show you how to appreciate the small gifts life has to offer." If nothing else from this article stands out, make an attempt to remember that.

– CW

When Guo Chian Fa Shi offered me that beautiful orange globe, I felt the heft of the tangerine in my hand when I received it. I clearly knew its form as “tangerine”.

I inhaled the floral, citrus scent, and felt its cool, dappled skin against my nose and lips. The sound of the skin pulling away from the fruit filled my ears. The white interior of the peel formed a feathery mesh as it lifted from the fruit, reminding me of the texture of yeast bread.

I ate the fruit slowly, section by section. I observed the experience of the fruit on my tongue, the changing taste and texture as I chewed it.

I reflected on the causes and conditions that brought it to me. The hand that passed it to me, the trip to the store to purchase the fruit, the gardeners who tended the tree, the sun, rain and wind that nurtured its growth, the circumstances that germinated the original seed...I appreciated that it was now inside

my body - a part of me. What was once so carefully nourished was now nourishing me.

These thoughts were soon replaced with the recognition that the original tangerine form was completely gone. Just one moment ago it had this tremendous physical presence; indeed, all of my senses fully experienced this fruit. Now it was changed. Still, I experienced no sense of loss. Instead, I recognized my role in creating this change, and I relished every aspect of those moments of change. I felt tremendous gratitude for the entire experience.

Now, I know that tangerines have no sensation, perception, volition, or consciousness. My response to tangerine impermanence will likely be different from my response to the ultimate experience of impermanence: death. But my experience with that wonderful tangerine is like a little tickle, pointing me towards something else.

– AF





Okay I am done trying to put down on paper what the retreat experience was like for me. I have tried to really explain why it was so great, but everything I write down sounds cheesy and seems to lose its meaning. The bottom line is that the camp and retreat are a great opportunity to meet some incredible people, relax and generally slow down your life. If your life is not actually busy and it doesn't need any slowing down, well then the retreat is a good chance to think about what you can do to pick it up a bit. Realistically the camp revolved around three simple ideas: mindfulness, relaxation and compassion. Mindfulness is trying to ground oneself in the moment. It is being aware of one's surroundings and actions in order to live every moment to the utmost. Relaxation is allowing things to be the way that they actually are instead of trying to force them into what you think they should be. I remember a quote from a movie that

said, "real sharpness comes without effort" and in my mind this is the essence of relaxation. Compassion is somewhat self-explanatory and involves being aware of one's actions and how they affect other members of the community. During the camp everyone engages in "mindful work practice" but instead of feeling like a burden, it is just nice knowing that whatever you are doing is helping everyone out.

During both the Zen camp and the Zen retreat the main activity is sitting meditation. Of course in typical (I guess it is typical) Zen fashion everything becomes a form of meditation, but nevertheless sitting is the main form of practice. While you meditate, you relax and try and focus on your breathing (mindfulness). You keep your thoughts from wandering and you don't try and force any kind of profound changes. There is no real "goal" of sitting, but there is a marked sense

of improvement and achievement. At the beginning of the camp sitting was painful and after every session I would have to spend almost an equal amount of time before I could move around again. By the end of the camp though, sitting had become rather pleasant and several times I found myself laughing uncontrollably because my body felt so together. I had never really meditated before the camp, but I have continued to do so after the camp and I see no reason why I would stop in the foreseeable future.

For some reason I didn't give much thought to the "religious" aspects of the retreat and I was actually surprised when I realized that the camp was lead by two nuns and a former monk. This proved to be one of the best aspects of the camp as there is no pressure to convert or conform to religious ideals. It is all very relaxed and comfortable. I loved hearing about the Dharma, but what was more impressive was being in the presence of Guo Chian Fa Shi, Chang Wu Fa Shi and Guo Gu. All three of these teachers live the Dharma and the example of mindfulness, relaxation and compassion they presented was undeniably powerful.



So what did I take away from the week of meditation and silence? Well I did not achieve enlightenment. I did not become a Buddhist or make any radical changes to my lifestyle. What I did do was see how simple and fulfilling life can potentially be. I left with a strong urge to help people and also to help myself. Two days after I left the retreat I went into the hospital for an operation. I was in the hospital for a week and the retreat definitely helped me to stay calm and patient through the experience. What's more, my recovery was unusually fast something that I attribute to the positive physical effects of not only meditation, but a week of positive energy and healthy living. There is no doubt in my mind that everyone should attend a Zen retreat. It is a unique experience that leaves you feeling excited with life and I will continue to recommend it to everyone that I know. This is the least that I can do as I feel incredibly grateful for having been presented with such an opportunity.

– AB



Beginners' Zen Camp above; Zen Retreat for Young People below.



Why Should I Believe You?

belief is not necessary in any case
but faith is inevitable once the action
is produced all come to faith
not through belief but
through experience and pain suffering
is not belief ecstasy is not belief nor is hope belief.
belief does not exist and exists therefore
only to be proven not to exist existence
does not exist but faith exists
and is not to be messed with but
acted that is why i say left
into the night screaming earl gray tea
green glasses pen scratching.
white cup water pen running out of
ink brown formica table wooden
trim flannel shirt grey beard
pen scratching music playing blues
gaining and pushed into the fringes
never straining.
press float naked
perhaps but peeled never and
so on and so forth but belief
not necessary not needed a myth
an impossibility only action is.
faith is but comes after action and
can impede the flow and silence
if professed too loudly or screamed.
church not necessary religion an
abhorrence and a monk another name for a poet only in dreams.
i hear that belief believed
results in further cobwebs of belief
and further cobwebs of belief result
in stasis.

belief can not be dynamic
because that negates belief.
faith
can be dynamic only in action.
belief in faith is belief in not
two not in one which is
buddha babble for practice.
process is not necessary but needed in order
to arrive through.
there is no side only through.
belief is not
through but is a dream of those
with no legs to stand on
i am
here but not here.
this is not
belief.

if I bang my head on
the wall it will bleed out but the
blood will clot and not flow.
you will see it, i will live.
if
i bang my head on the wall the
blood might not flow out but
flow in.
you will not see it, i will die.
possibility is process
and not belief.
belief is a con-
game a shell game a ring toss a ferris wheel
a fishing rod cast into a bucket

a walk down
the midway at 2 minutes to midnight
a cotton candy foot long hawaiian
ice combination of kiwi and blue raspberry
a visit to the petting zoo
a look at the tractor show
a pork chop with cajun sauce
a mini donut the 4 h husbandry fair
a fool's paradise.

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The Past

News from the
Chan Meditation Center
and the DDMBA Worldwide

Dharma Drum Mountain Opens Officially in Taiwan

This article was contributed by our correspondent in Taiwan, Wei Tan.



On March 25, 1989, about a thousand disciples of Chan Master Sheng Yen gathered at Nung Chan Monastery to recite the Great Compassion Dharani. It was a special prayer service led by the master to invoke the help of Guanyin (Avalokitesvara) Bodhisattva to find a new place for his group. Nung Chan Monastery, then serving as the spiritual center of an expanding group of people practicing under the guidance of Master Sheng Yen, was facing the possibility of having to move because of city development. For months, the group had tried to find a new place to no avail. Coincidentally, at around the same time the service was held, another monk, Ven. Quan Du, was also conducting a Great Compassion Dharani prayer service to help him find a master to whom to entrust

his temple for future development. A couple of days after the services, the paths of the two monks met. The piece of land where the little temple once stood is now the heart of the Dharma Drum Mountain World Center for Buddhist Education.

More than sixteen years after the special prayer service, a sprawling facility that combines modern design with traditional and monastic with non-monastic elements now stands around the initial piece of land. On October 21, 2005, an inauguration ceremony entitled “The Rising Great Compassion” was held to commemorate its official opening. In his inauguration speech, Master Sheng Yen related a conversation with an artist, who had said to him that Dharma Drum Mountain





was a piece of art created by him. The master responded that the artist was wrong, for Dharma Drum Mountain was actually a piece of art created by the great number of people who had resonated with his vision and who had contributed to making it a reality. He was merely the person who had lit the fire.

The collective spirit was indeed palpable on the inauguration day. The morning started out with light rain and a monk half-jokingly said to me that it was the devas bestowing purification on the facility. For a while, I stood outside the Great Buddha Hall on the hill, enjoying the constantly changing patterns of clouds and the panoramic view of the town below. Sixteen thousand people were to participate in the ceremony that day. When people started to arrive, it was

still raining lightly. Looking down from the hill, I could see lines and lines of people walking in orderly fashion up the road towards the hilltop. Participants had been assigned to sit in various locations around the campus, where the ceremony was to unfold simultaneously. Large projector screens had been set up to broadcast the main proceeding live in all locations. The number of participants represented only a small fraction of the nearly one million people who had contributed to the project in various ways. Without the collective effort, Dharma Drum Mountain would not have become a reality.

The rain slowly subsided. By the time the guests of honor started to arrive, it had completely stopped, although the sky was still cloudy. Among the guests of honor were

religious leaders from around the world who were also participating in a series of religious symposiums held in Taipei to celebrate the inauguration. Other guests of honor included famous actors and renowned artists, and representatives of the major media outlets in Taiwan, many of whom were on site to broadcast the event. President Chen Shui-Bian, and the Mayor of Taipei, Mr. Ma Ying-Jeou, also participated. There were monks and nuns from various Buddhist traditions. Nineteen revered elderly masters from Taiwan, Mainland China, and Southeast Asia had been invited to dedicate the statues at different locations.

Participants were asked to silently recite the Great Compassion Dharani or to observe silence throughout the three-hour event. As a result, a solemn but moving atmosphere was readily felt. One of the high points of the ceremony was the unveiling of the statues at the various locations. After the banners hanging in front of the three huge Buddha statues in the Great Buddha Hall were removed, they were carried horizontally out of the hall from the stage, passing over the heads of the audience, symbolizing the blessings of the three jewels. People earnestly raised their hands to touch the banners, which flew like rivers of silk above their heads.

Mr. Bawa Jain, the secretary general of the World Council of Religious Leaders who participated at the inauguration ceremony, made an interesting comment when he spoke briefly at the gala dinner of the religious symposiums. He said he was most impressed that even though both President Chen and Mayor Ma, who is from a rival party and is projected to be a contender for the next presidential election, were both present at the

inauguration ceremony, they had not been invited to make speeches. Rather, they simply participated in the ceremony as everyone else did. As a result, the ceremony was free from politics. An interesting observation indeed! Mr. Jain joked that now that the precedent had been set by Master Sheng Yen, it should be all right for other organizations to emulate this.

In Chinese, the founding and inauguration of a new place is sometimes referred to as "opening the mountain." This is an important concept as it is intimately linked to what Dharma Drum Mountain is all about. Master Sheng Yen teaches that each and every one of us has a treasure mountain in our heart and mind. This is the treasure mountain of wisdom and compassion. Therefore, the founding and inauguration of Dharma Drum Mountain marked not only the birth and coming of age of an organization, but at a deeper level also symbolized the process of our own search, discovery, and opening of the inherent treasure mountain within us.

Before participating in the inauguration ceremony, I had seen photos and video programs introducing Dharma Drum Mountain. But it was not until I set foot there and came in touch with that great number of people that I truly realized what was involved in actualizing the vision, and how much positive influence it will be able to exert on the society. In fact, it is hard to define Dharma Drum Mountain. As I mentioned earlier, it combines modernity and tradition, as the buildings were all built in contemporary style, with visible, but not dominant traditional elements; it combines monasticism with non-monastic elements, as the complex serves as a monastery for hundreds of monastics, an

academic institute for scholars and students of Buddhist studies, a spiritual center for practitioners from around the world, and even a scenic place for tourists. Indeed, it has a place for everyone.

I felt that I had witnessed the unfolding of a significant chapter in Chinese Buddhism, an exciting experiment, if you wish to put it that way. During my visit, I had the good fortune to stay at the monk's quarter, which is off limits to tourists, in order to protect the monastic life. Before departing, I had a conversation with Ven. Chang Wen, a young monk from the USA who is now a resident member of the monastic community. I told him that after the visit, I realized that it was probably not difficult for Shifu to spend six years in solitary retreat or to run meditation retreats around the world, but it was a tremendously difficult endeavor to bring together so many people to work on the vision of a pure land on Earth based on his direct experience of the Buddha's teachings. Ven. Chang Wen smiled and nodded his head in agreement.



Caring for the Dying

Singapore DDM was pleased to invite Ms. Kuo Huei-Ri of Taiwan to give two talks on Caring for the Dying, on August 23-24. Ms. Kuo, a founder of DDM in Taiwan, and of the Association for Caring for the Dying, taught a year-long course at Pintung Community University on birth and death.

“As we throw ourselves into the work of caring for a dying patient, it's all too easy to make the mistake of disrespecting the patient's wishes by forcibly enlightening them with Buddhist doctrines. This isn't really compassion – though often we imagine it is – but simply a matter of taking advantage of the patient, who cannot in his weakened state object to our ‘care.’ “

Proceeding in a humorous vein, Kuo explained this common trap, and tried to get us truly to empathize with the patient's wishes and suffering. “There is no single fixed or automatic procedure for caring for the dying,” she said. “We just need to listen with our whole heart, share our passion for life, and unleash the power of love.”

After suffering for a long time stuck in bed, patients tend to become isolated. On the other hand it brings about increased sensitivity in all senses and in the mind. Yet patients are often disinclined to share their feelings with us because of our inadvertent tactlessness and lack of respect for their situation.

Kuo put forward a vision of “Four Wholes,” focusing on the Whole Person, the Whole Family, the Whole Team and the Whole Process. Considering the whole person, the fact that a person is ill does not mean that he or

she is without wisdom, but can still communicate and share. The love and care given by the whole family is also vital. Beyond the family, a whole team of many individuals takes care of the patient. And the journey from being admitted to the hospital through to the funeral is a whole process to be managed as part of caring for the dying. Every person lying on his deathbed is a Bodhisattva we can learn from, and caring for them is actually the fastest way for us to realize our own Buddha nature.

Kuo's two talks drew large audiences, including a number of medical professionals. They spoke appreciatively of her excellent lectures and voiced the hope she would come again.

Master Sheng Yen has said: "We need to convert our feelings of powerlessness, of having nowhere to turn and nothing in this life to rely on, into love, splendor and self-esteem. If we can truly realize that birth and death are inevitable parts of life, our lives take on a new dignity."

Ecology Seminar Spotlights Eastern Wisdom

On August 27, the Taiwanese Ecological Stewardship Association hosted a seminar on ecology at the Nun Chan Monastery in Taipei. Featured speakers were Michael Slaby, Coordinator for Earth Charter Youth Groups (ECYG), and Mohit Mukherjee, Manager of Educational Outreach for the Earth Charter. Those in attendance included students from the Chung Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies, DDM Sangha University, and members of the DDM Youth Association and the WYPS.

Addressing a large crowd of young people, Slaby expressed his hope that oriental wisdom would attain greater prominence in ecological thinking as a result of interactions among youth worldwide, noting that many Westerners are indeed keenly interested in Eastern wisdom, though not much has yet been put into practice. In this light, beyond concern for human rights, the spirit of the Earth Charter may also be extended to caring for all living things.

Commenting on the fact that in Germany it will soon cost NT\$20 (about US\$0.60) for a plastic bag, he also proposed a 4th R to the 3 R's of Reduce, Reuse, Recycle: to Refuse non-environmentally sound products.

Slaby, in Taiwan for his first visit, recounted how the ECYG was first launched by a Philippine student inspired by the Earth Charter. It has since blossomed to encompass a wide range of independent youth charity groups all over the world, interacting through the Internet.

The mission of the ECYG is to put the Earth Charter into practice, in collaboration with society as a whole. It aspires to establish a sound ethical foundation for the emerging global society, building a sustainable world based on respect for nature, fostering universal human rights, economic justice and a culture of peace.

DDM Toronto Chapter Retreat

On March 12-13, DDM's Toronto Chapter enjoyed the privilege of a visit by Gilbert Gutierrez, a Dharma heir of Master Sheng Yen from Los Angeles, for a one-day meditation retreat

on Saturday, with dinner and discussion in the evening, followed by a Dharma talk on Sunday morning. The retreat was attended by more than 20 practitioners of various levels, both Easterners and Westerners, which proved to be a large crowd for the small meditation room, though everyone managed to squeeze in.

Mr. Gutierrez explained that meditation is the practice of “knowing that the arising mind is the non-arising mind.” Many people misunderstand, thinking meditation is supposed to get rid of all thoughts and feelings, which would be like trying to turn oneself into a stone or a dried out piece of wood. The aim, rather, is to be completely aware of the mind and the illusion of the self. This is the misapprehension that gives rise to greed, ignorance and hatred, causing suffering. If we can be aware that the arising mind and the non-arising mind are the same, it helps us to see our true enlightened nature, and delivers us from suffering.

Chan practice stresses non-duality. In “Faith in Mind,” Third Patriarch Seng Ts’an said, “The Supreme Way is not difficult if only you do not pick and choose.” Chan discourages the cultivation of likes and dislikes; however, it does not ask us to disregard differences but simply to allow the mind to be aware of things as they are. Mr. Gutierrez cited eating as an example of the spirit of Chan in everyday life: when our body is hungry, we eat to feed it. As we chew, we are mindful of the food and its taste. However, we do not dwell on the taste, saying, “This tastes good, I want more, that tastes bad ...” We do not pick and choose. Similarly, during meditation, when a wandering thought arises, we are mindful of it but we do not dwell on it

or fight against it. Wandering thoughts are like house guests that come and go; if the guests stay too long, the host and the guests may get confused as to their respective roles.

Meditation should be calm and relaxing. This is particularly important for practitioners of Huatou, in which it is easy to get worked up emotionally. Mr. Gutierrez pointed out that every Buddha statue looks serene and peaceful, not stressed out with a twisted face. In our daily lives we should cultivate calmness so that our face reflects this serenity. The right way to apply a method is to use it gently. Hold on to it as you would a thread, neither yanking too tightly nor holding on too loosely, lest it slip away.

At dinner Mr. Gutierrez asked, “Where is your mind?” and compared it to a blank movie screen. The screen is empty, simply reflecting whatever is projected onto it. It does not discriminate, pass judgment, modify or enhance. When the projector stops, the movie ends and the screen is blank again. The true nature works the same way. We start with a blank screen, then our arising mind persuades us that certain things are real and permanent. This clinging to the images causes suffering as we fail to see the transitory nature of phenomena.

In Sunday morning’s talk practitioners discussed the differences between the Five Precepts and the Ten Commandments, and considered what it takes to be a good practitioner. Someone asked whether vanity was as bad as stealing, to which Mr Gutierrez replied that we all have varying degrees of self-attachment and must simply do the best we can.

He illustrated his point with an anecdote about Shifu. Once at a retreat in New York he had to tell a participant assigned to clean his bathroom not to touch his face towel. Apparently the participant had been so eager to do a good job, he had used a tattered old rag he found to scrub the toilet, scarcely realizing it was Shifu's face towel.

The Toronto Chapter thoroughly enjoyed Mr. Gutierrez's witty and enlightening Dharma talks, and everyone went home inspired. After the Dharma talk, Mr. Gutierrez visited Niagara Falls, escorted by Chapter members. It was a radiant sunny day and the view of the falls was splendid.

"I am truly grateful for the wonderful hospitality and friendship that I encountered in Toronto," said Mr. Gutierrez.

Family Chan Camp

On the weekend of August 5-7, 2005, 137 people from 36 families attended the annual DDM Family Chan Camp. It was a great success, and even more people are expected next year.

Here are two campers' accounts, provided by Guo-Chii Fa Shi:

"My son and I attended the Family Zen Camp, which is open to families who want to enjoy a weekend of safe organized activities in a beautiful country setting with trail walks, a small lake, dormitories, a dining hall, and a spacious Chan Hall for meditation and social gatherings. Ages range from toddlers to senior citizens, and all are welcome, Buddhists and non-Buddhists.

"This year, the theme was 'mindfulness,' cultivated in all activities, including arts and crafts, yoga, Dharma Q&A, martial arts (kung-fu), cleaning up, and yes, eating.

"One of the highlights was the walking meditation in which we gathered by the lake and each of us was given a bowl of water to carry back to the Chan Hall. The idea was to carry the water mindfully up a steep road for several hundred yards without spilling any. When we arrived we made an offering of water to the Buddha, and bowed. At the end there were about 130 bowls of water neatly lined up at the entrance. It was beautiful.

"On Saturday evening the younger campers put on skits under Jimmy Yu's direction. The dining hall echoed with waves of laughter. Afterwards we gathered by the bonfire and passed around a candle to symbolize sharing the Dharma, as sparks from the fire exploded into the cool evening air. Then everyone had a great time dancing, chatting, and toasting marshmallows (mindfully, of course).

"On Sunday morning we chanted the name of Amitabha Buddha while slow-walking around the Chan Hall, then shared our thoughts about ourselves as a family. This was a fitting way to close a brief but wonderful three days of Zen camp.

"Thanks to the following folks who made Zen Camp a joyful lesson in mindfulness: Guo Chii Fashi, Camp Director; Dr. Pei Yang, Professor of Psychology, who presented the Parents' Workshop; Jimmy Yu, Activities Director; Mr. Paul Lee, President of the New Jersey DDMBA Chapter in charge of all the volunteers who did so much to make the camp run smoothly; Mrs. Shu Juan who led the dedicated team

of cooks; Ms. Rikki Asher, who presented the Yoga program; Mr. David Berman, who presented the Kung-Fu program; Mr. Howard, DDRC Facilities Administrator.”

– Ernest Heau, Parent

“The Zen Camp lasted only a weekend but it was still a lot of fun.

“The theme of this year’s camp was mindfulness, which basically means being aware of your actions in the present moment.

“Most of the Camp’s activities were related to Buddhism. We played a game called “Secret Bodhisattva” in which everyone was expected to behave nicely toward a particular person, selected at random. However, they could not make their kind actions obvious because they are, after all, a Secret Bodhisattva.

“The adults had services in the morning, while the kids had a discussion with Guo Chii Fa Shi about breaking through the wall of selfishness, and using the fallen bricks to build a bridge to other people.

“On the night of the bonfire we passed around a lit candle, which represented the light of the Dharma. When we received the light we made a wish on how to better ourselves in the future.

“I enjoyed the camp very much. The people were nice, the activities were fun, and the meals were pretty good too.

“It was nice to have a dormitory room to myself. I would like to go back next year. I learned how to bow properly, how to prostrate, which is supposed to help one become more open to other people.

“The walking meditation was a little tricky, but the instructors seemed to understand. Since they reminded us of the practice of mindfulness, I now am more aware when I do something that is not mindful or considerate.

“I recommend this camp to other families. It will help you practice Buddhism, strengthen family values, introduce you to new people...and of course, teach you to practice mindfulness.”

– Noah (age 15)

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.

Three-day Retreat (DDRC)

Friday, February 17, 8:30 pm –
Monday, February 20, 5 pm

Three-day College Retreat (DDRC)

Thursday, January 5, 8:30 pm –
Sunday, January 8, 5 pm

One-day Chanting and Chan Retreat (CMC)
Saturday, January 14, 9 am – 5 pm

Three-day Chanting and Chan (DDRC)
Thursday, March 23, 8:30 pm –
Sunday, March 26, 5 pm

Five-day Western Zen Retreat, Drs. John Crook, Simon Child & Hilary Richard
Friday, March 10, 6 pm –
Wednesday, March 15, 10 am
Please apply by January 10; application form is available at www.chancenter.org

Chan Practice

Monday Night Chanting
Every Monday, 7 – 9:15 pm
Devotional chanting of Amitabha Buddha;
88 Buddhas Repentance on last Monday of each month.

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 May 15 for Buddha's Birthday Celebration)
10:00 am – 11:00 am Group Meditation
11:00 am – 12:30 pm Dharma Talk
12:30 - 1:00 pm: lunch offerings

1:00 - 2:00 pm: lunch
2:00 - 3:00 pm: chanting; Q & A for English-speaking practitioners

Great Compassionate Dharani Repentance Service
Second Sunday of each month. 2 – 4 pm

Classes at CMC

New Meditation Class Series:
Beginners' or Intermediate classes,
Two Saturdays, 9:30 am – 12 noon, \$40
Please call for dates or check website.
Pre-registration required.

Beginners' Dharma Class
Please call for dates.

Taijiquan Classes
Thursdays, 7:30 – 9:00 pm, ongoing
with instructor David Ngo, \$80 for a session of 16 classes, or \$25/month.

Yoga
Saturdays, 3 – 4:30 pm, with instructor Rikki Asher. \$80 for ten classes, or \$10/class.
February 4, 11, 18, 25; March 4, 11, 18;
April 1, 8, 15.

Special Events

Chinese New Year Celebration
Sunday, February 5, 10 am – 3 pm.

Chinese New Year's Day Prayer Service
Thursday, February 9
9:30 – 11:30 am, prayer service;
2 – 4 pm, Great Compassion Dharani

Chan Center Affiliates

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

NORTH AMERICA

USA:

USA Headquarters

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

Dharma Drum Retreat Center

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

California

Davis:

Contact: Grace Wei
6600 Orchard Park Circle #6221
Davis, CA 95616
Tel/Fax: 530-297-1972
Email: ddmbasacra@yahoo.com

Los Angeles:

Contact: Stanley Kung, Sam Chin, Paul Lin.
1168 San Gabriel Blvd., #R
Rosemead, CA 91770
Tel/Fax: 818-248-1614
Email: smkung@sbcglobal.net or
paullinddm@aol.com
<http://members.aol.com/ddmchan>

Riverside:

Tel: 909-789-6052

San Francisco

Contact: H. C. Chang
102 South Camino Real
Millbrae, CA 94030
Tel: 650-692-3259
Fax: 650-692-2256
Email: ddmbsaf@yahoo.com

Florida

DDMBA Orlando Meditation Group:

Contact: jin Bowden
6082 Red Stage Drive
Port Orange, FL 32128
Tel: 386-322-0524
Fax: 386-322-3639
Email: jin_bowden@yahoo.com

Georgia

Duluth:

Contact: Sophia Chen
4977 Dillard's Mill Way
Duluth, GA 30096
Tel: 770-416-0941
Fax: 770-417-5897
Email: sophialee046@hotmail.com

Illinois

Belvedere

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

Chicago

Contact: Isabel Huang
2299 Pflingsten Road
North Brook, IL 60062
Tel: 847-480-1583
Fax: 847-480-9064
Email: isabelhuang@comcast.net
<http://www.ddmbachicago.org>

Michigan

Contact: Li Hua Kong
1431 Stanlake Drive
E. Lansing, MI 48823
Tel/Fax: 517-332-0003
Email: kongl@sbcglobal.net

New Jersey

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

Piscataway:

Contact: Maggie Laffey
Tel: (732)463-1689
Email: mfxl@earthlink.net

New York

Manhattan:

The Meditation Group
Marymount Manhattan College
221 E. 71st (2nd and 3rd Avenues)
Contact: Charlotte Mansfield
Tel: 212-410-3897
Because of building security, please call
before visiting.
Email: MeditationGroup@yahoo.com
<http://www.MeditationGroup.org>

Long Island:

Contact: Hai Dee Lee
P.O. Box 423
Upton, NY 11973
Tel: 631-689-8548 or 631-344-2062
Fax: 631-344-4057
Email: hdlee@bnl.gov

Rochester:

Contact: Min Wang
170 Maywood Drive
Rochester, NY 14618
Tel/Fax: 585-242-9096
Email: min_wang@xelus.com

North Carolina

Contact: Hannah Yuan
323 Whitney Lane
Durham, NC 27713
Tel: 919-450-2668
Fax: 919-991-1728
Email: hannahyuan0410@yahoo.com

Northeast Ohio:

Contact: Jeff Larko
339 Valley Brook Oval
Hinckley, OH 44233
Tel: 330-225-8722
Email: DDMBA_Ohio@yahoo.com

Oregon

Contact: Sabrina Huang
12715 SW 158th Terrace
Beaverton, OR 97007
Tel/Fax: 503-579-8582
Email: sabhuang@yahoo.com

Pennsylvania

State College

Contact: Kun-Chang Yu
425 Waupelani Drive #515
State College, PA 16801
Tel: 814-867-9253
Fax: 814-867-5148
Email: ddmdba_pa01@yahoo.com

Texas

Arlington:

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

Vermont

Contact: Jui-chu Lee
16 Bower St.
S. Burlington, VT 05403
Tel/Fax: 802-658-3413
Email: juichulee@yahoo.com

Washington

Contact: Dephne Chen
411 13th Ave. W.
Kirkland, WA 98033
Tel: 425-889-9898
Fax: 425-828-2646
Email: dephne66@hotmail.com

Canada:

Richmond

Contact: Mei Hwei Lin
10800 No. 5 Road
Richmond, BC, Canada V7A 4E5
Tel: 604-277-1357
Fax: 604-277-1352
Email: ddmvan@infinet.net
www.ddmvan.ca

Toronto

Contact: Quin Feng Yang
265 Main St., Unit 804
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4C4x3
Tel/Fax: 416-691-8429
Cell: 416-712-9927
Email: ddmdba_toronto@yahoo.com

Mexico:

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
10000 Zagreb, Croatia
Tel/Fax: ++385 1 481 00 74
Email: info@dharmaaloka.org
<http://www.dharmaaloka.org>
Teacher: Zarko Andricevic
Ongoing program of study and practice,
including courses in Buddhism and Chan
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Belgium:

Luxemburg

15, Rue Jean Schaack L-2563 Bonnevoie
GD.DE Luxemburg Tel: 352-400080

Poland:

Warsaw

Zwiazek Buddystow Czan (Chan Buddhist Union):

Contact: Pawel Rosciszewski, Beata Kazimierska

Tel/Fax: (22) 7275663, GSM 0-601-205602

Tel/Fax: (22) 6208446, (22) 6498670,
GSM 0-601-205602

Switzerland:

Zurich

Teacher: Max Kalin (Guo-yun)

Tel/fax: 411 382 1676

Mobile: 4179 416 8088

Email: MaxKailin@chan.ch

<http://www.chan.ch>

United Kingdom:

London

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

Western Ch'an Fellowship:

24 Woodgate Ave. Bury
Lancashire, BL9 7RU, U.K.

Contact: Simon Child, secretary

Email:

secretary@westernchanfellowship.org,

www.westernchanfellowship.org

ASIA

Hong Kong:

Room 205, 2/F BLK B,
Alexandra Industrial Building, 23-
27 Wing Hong St., Cheung Sha Wan,
Kowloon, Hong Kong
Tel: 852-2865-3110
Fax: 852-2591-4810

Malaysia:

*Dharma Drum Mountain Buddhism
Information Centre in Malaysia:*

30 Jalan 16/6, 46350 Petaling Jaya,
Selangor DE, Malaysia
Tel: 603-79600841, 603-7319245
Fax: 603-7331413, 603-79600842
Email: kahon@pc.jaring.my
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Singapore:

*Dharma Drum Mountain (Singapore
Liaison Office):*

No. 10 Second Avenue,
Singapore 266660
Contact: Ms. Yeh Yin Shia
Tel & Fax
(65) 6469 6565
Cell 9745 6565.
Email: ysyehsg@yahoo.com.tw

Taiwan:

Nung Ch'an Monastery:

No. 89, Lane 65, Tayeh Road
Peitou, Taipei
Tel: 02-2893-3161
Fax: 02-2895-8969

Dharma Drum Mountain:

No.14-5, Lin 7, Sanchieh Village,
Chinshan, Taipei
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<http://www.ddm.org.tw>

*Dharma Drum International
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Contact: Guo Yuan Fa Shi
Tel: 886-02-2778-5007-9
Fax: 886-02-2778-0807
Email: gchiis@ddm.org.tw
Saturday, 8:30-11:30 am, meditation and
discussion in English at An Her Branch
Monastery

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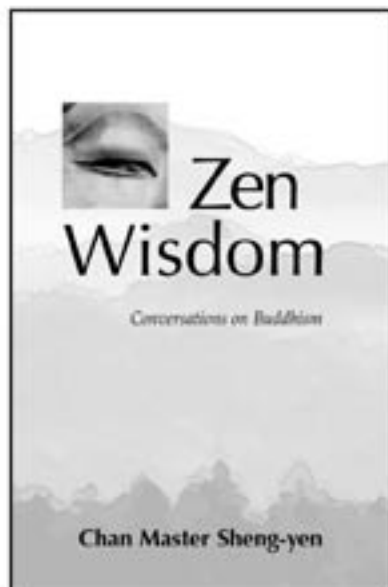
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Australia
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Sydney

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Normhnhurst,
N.S.W 2076, Australia
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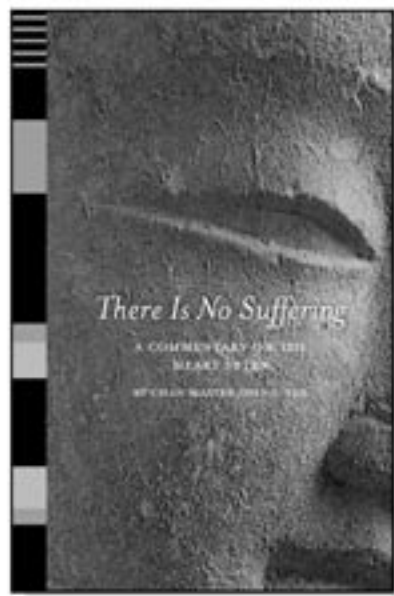


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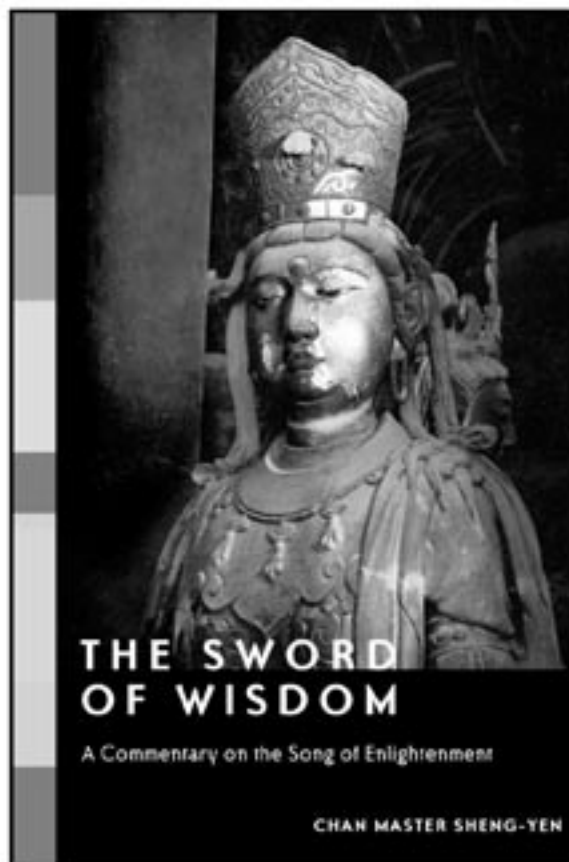


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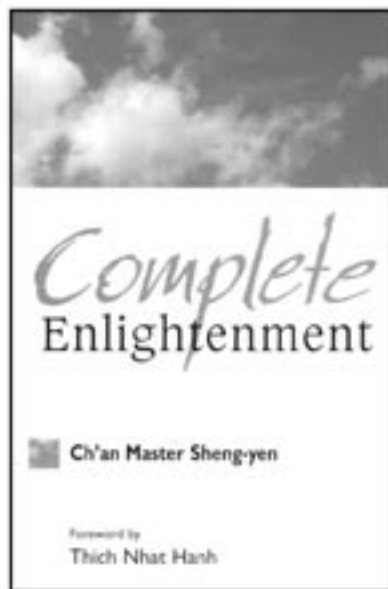
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