

Chan 禪 Magazine

Winter 2005



Chan Meditation Center

**Institute of Chung-Hwa Buddhist Culture
90-56 Corona Avenue
Elmhurst, NY 11373**

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“People who have never had a taste of Chan often like to speculate about enlightenment. But lacking a clear sense of what the Dharma actually entails, they tend to delight in the exotic and cook up all kinds of strange fantasies . . . Enlightenment is not something that can be comprehended by philosophical speculation or flights of the occult imagination. Should you even be tempted to conjecture or fantasize about it, you will actually be moving farther and farther away from it. You will be heading south when you should be going north!”

—Chan Master Sheng Yen
From *Hoofprint of the Ox*

Chan Magazine

Volume 25, Number 1
Winter, 2005

Chan Magazine is published quarterly by the Institute of Chung-Hwa Buddhist Culture, Chan Meditation Center, 90-56 Corona Avenue, Elmhurst, NY 11373. The magazine is a non-profit venture; it accepts no advertising and is supported solely by contributions from members of the Chan Center and the readership. Donations to support the magazine and other Chan Center activities may be sent to the above address and will be gratefully appreciated. Your donation is tax-deductible. For information about Chan Center activities please call (718) 592-6593. For Dharma Drum Publications please call (718) 592-0915. E-mail the Center at ddmbaus@yahoo.com, or the magazine at chanmagazine@yahoo.com, or visit us online at: <http://www.chancenter.org>.

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From The Editor

Buddhist practice is about turning from delusion back to reality, to paraphrase Bodhidharma, and one of the delights of practice is the continual rediscovery of how smoothly seductive delusion can be, and how counter-intuitive reality.

Our views on the environment, for example. We at the Chan Center certainly think of ourselves as an environmentally friendly bunch: everything is printed on the back of something that had been printed before; paper teacups are initialed and re-used until they melt away; the stacks of institutional brown paper towels are cut up so they can be used a half-sheet at a time. And when we opened the Dharma Drum Retreat Center in pastoral Pine Bush, I'm sure everyone thought, as I did, that the move was perfectly in keeping with that environmentalism: we were getting out of the city, the very capital of the profligacy and pollution of modern life, and going back to the land, where life was simple and the air was clean.

No thanks to us. As it turns out, the old Chan retreats in our three-story brick hovel on a crowded block in Elmhurst cost only a fraction of the energy per meditator than the same activities held in the rolling Shawangunk foothills.

In an article in *The New Yorker* of Oct. 18, the writer David Owen demonstrates with alarming clarity that many of us who try to be environmentally friendly have been making the wrong friends. We tend to “think of New York City as an environmental nightmare,” Owens

writes, but “by the most significant measures New York is the greenest community in the United States, and one of the greenest cities in the world.”

How so? The first and foremost environmental menace is the burning of fossil fuels, and New Yorkers are the most fossil-fuel-efficient people in America. Over 80% of us don't drive to work, we're the most efficient users of electricity in the nation, and we live in apartment buildings—those three facts alone make us the country's leading practicing environmentalists. “If [New York City] were granted statehood,” says Owen, it would be the twelfth most populous state, but “would rank fifty-first in per-capita energy use.”

The main factor contributing to New York's energy-efficiency is the same thing that gives it a bad environmental image—population density. New York City is 800 times more crowded than the nation as a whole, and it is that very compactness that limits our opportunities to be wasteful. If you took the population of New York and gave each of us the amount of space that people have in suburban Connecticut, for example, we'd fill up all of New England plus Delaware and New Jersey, we'd all have to buy cars, our electricity consumption would quadruple, and much of our heating and cooling would be going, literally, through the roof.

Which is approximately what we've done by relocating Chan retreats from a couple thousand square feet in Queens to 120 acres

upstate. First there's the cost, in fossil fuel, of getting to and from Pine Bush; then there's the inherent inefficiency of all those widely separated one and two-story buildings; and we haven't even touched on the land-use politics of giving every retreatant more than an acre to him or herself...

But this isn't meant to be a polemic against the retreat center, which as an environment for practice is worth every calorie it costs. If it's a polemic against anything, it's the unex-

amined assumption, which as a phenomenon is quite a bit more widespread, and quite a bit more energy-expensive than meditation, whether urban or rural. It turns out to be false that big cities are environmental disasters, and false that moving to the country is good for the planet...but it turns out to be true that, as the old saying goes, the best place to practice Chan is in the busy intersection. In more ways than one.



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 second 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 11, Morning Lecture

By now you have learned something about how to relax. By relaxing you will be able to put down your burdens of body and mind. When we find it difficult to relax our bodies, we also find it difficult to relax our minds. If we have expectations, then we're seeking something. If we have fear, we're rejecting something or we lack security. This results in nervousness and tension. Being unsatisfied and having cravings means we have a seeking mind, and that will make us nervous. We can see therefore that relaxation is not just concerned with the muscles; it also involves our thoughts, concepts, and emotions. We have to put them all down to fully relax. When you can do that all the time, you will have no more vexations and you will be on the path of liberation.

After learning how to relax, you should apply two rules in your practice. The first is: "Let go of all forms." "Forms" can be understood generally as phenomena or objects of perception. So letting go of all forms means realizing formlessness. So, please let go of all forms. The second rule is: "Let all affairs come to rest." This means putting down all mental and bodily concerns.

If you can do this completely you will realize no-mind. At this point, in a way of speaking, you have nothing to do; there is nothing good or bad, important or unimportant, to do for yourself or others. At this time you are truly relaxed and you have been able to put down everything. Please keep reminding yourself to apply these two rules. Now please repeat after me: Let go of all forms; let all affairs come to rest.

[Audience repeats]

If you like, you can use this as a kind of mantra that you can repeat over and over. So, when your mind is vexed, when you feel pain, fear, or any kind of unease, you can repeat these phrases and remind yourself of their meaning. If you do that your attitude and mental situation will change.

In order to realize the Dharma of Mind, the formless Dharma, you have to start with letting go of forms. Not knowing how to let go of forms, you can't get to the stage of formlessness. We have to let forms go one by one,

and the first forms to abandon are wandering thoughts, especially memories of the past and expectations about the future. Put down all thinking relating to past and future, and stay only in the present. This is the first step to letting go of forms.

Yesterday I asked you to please stay in the present. If you are doing sitting meditation, your mind should be only on this activity; you should have no ideas unrelated to meditation. The same applies to working, walking, eating, drinking, exercising, chanting, or doing prostrations. Your mind should simply be with the activity you're doing. Experience all



these activities fully, experience all the sensations related to the activity, and be aware of your mental reactions in the process. If you can let go of the past and the future and put your mind totally in the present, this means you have at least relinquished the forms of time.

After you have relaxed body and mind and your mood becomes stable, you can practice silent illumination. You begin by experiencing your entire body in the posture of meditation. Think of yourself as your whole body just sitting there. As you do this, do not pay any attention to any specific parts of the body. Be aware that you are meditating, but do not verbalize, "I am meditating." Merely maintain a general awareness of the body, not thinking about it; just being aware of it sitting there. When you can do this, you are already practicing silent illumination.

After some time of practicing this total body awareness, paying no attention to specific parts of the body, eventually you may no longer be aware of the body. The body seems no longer to exist because you're not focusing on any of its sensations. When the existence of the body seems to drop away, you can still see and hear things, and at this point your mind should take the sights and sounds as objects for your awareness. In other words, take the environment and your surroundings as your self, as the object of meditation. However, do not focus on any particular category of sights or sounds. If you continue practicing in this way, eventually the environment itself, which you have taken as the object of meditation, will also start to disappear. At this stage you have entered samadhi but you should not become attached to this state. Earlier we asked you to "let go of all forms," and "let all affairs

come to rest." These phrases accurately describe the method I've just spoken of.

To summarize how to practice silent illumination, the first stage is to relax the mind and body, and to simply experience the breath. The second stage is to shift the awareness away from the breath to the body as a whole, remembering not to focus on any particular part of the body. The third stage is when the burden of the body disappears and we take the environment, the surroundings, as the object of meditation.

After we contemplate the environment for a time, not placing particular attention on any special sights or sounds, eventually the environment will also disappear. At this point, we reach the fourth stage, in which the environment is gone, and we are just aware that we are meditating.

The fifth stage is when we are able to relinquish even the vague, subtle consciousness that we are meditating. The aim of this fifth stage is to also put down the mind that is in samadhi — letting go of its attachments. You need to relinquish the bliss of samadhi. When you can let go of attachment to samadhi, then it is possible to realize enlightenment.

When practicing silent illumination, one may experience these stages or one may not. Do not focus too much on this process of stages, and do not be too anxious about letting go of samadhi. You may discover yourself stuck in the same place for a long time. Just let go of the thought and move on. The main thing is letting go of all forms and letting all affairs come to rest. You just need to start with the first step. This is the method of silent illumination of the Caodong School of Chan.

Today, let's all do silent illumination, starting with relaxation. If it goes well, you may use it for the remainder of the retreat. If, however, you have problems with this method, still try it today. Tomorrow I'll teach another Chan method, that of the huatou. However, do not get into the mind-state where you want both of two good things, diamonds and gold. Just pick one method and stay with it.

While practicing silent illumination you may suddenly become aware that you cannot feel a part of your body, such as your hands. When and if this happens please do not be alarmed. It is because you have not been paying attention to that part of the body and as a result, you are not aware of sensations from it. This is actually a good sign and means you have been able to put down awareness of that part of the body. If you have no awareness of your entire body, again do not worry. Move your body a bit and then return to your awareness of your body just sitting there.

Another way to deal with the loss of feeling in part or all of the body is to just continue experiencing the self in meditation; just realizing you are still sitting there meditating. You can then shift your attention to the environment, taking it and your body as one entity. If you meditate in this way after losing sensations in the body, you will not feel isolated or have any sense of loss. You will still hear sounds in

the environment and your state of mind will be expansive and bright.

At this stage in which your body and the environment are unified, do not focus on any one kind of sound to listen to. If you do not hear any sounds, do not search for them. Some sounds will be loud and others soft, some interesting, others boring. Do not select among them; just have a generalized awareness of sounds.

“ . . . WHEN WE ARE ABLE TO RELINQUISH EVEN THE VAGUE, SUBTLE CONSCIOUSNESS THAT WE ARE MEDITATING . . . WHEN YOU CAN LET GO OF THE ATTACHMENT TO SAMADHI, THEN IT IS POSSIBLE TO REALIZE ENLIGHTENMENT.”

If your eyes are open, you will see there are people around you, that there is a floor in front of you and a ceiling above, but do not look at anything in particular. Just be aware that these phenomena are there. Gradually and naturally, if you continue practicing in this way, the environment will also disappear.

Generally, unless we are ill or have strong sensations in the body such as pain, numbness, itching, or soreness, we are not aware of sensations in our body. Other situations in which we would be more aware of our body include hunger or exhaustion. Otherwise, when everything is going smoothly, we are rarely aware of our bodies; we just use our bodies without feeling burdened by them. Our minds are also like this. If our minds are without wandering thoughts that bother, stimulate, or tempt us, then generally we are not so aware of our minds. This is also the case when we have no reason to fear anything.



Likewise the environment, which in a sense is our big body; it is the place where our body is located and continues to exist. If everything is going smoothly in the environment, we do not think about it much, almost as if it did not exist. On the other hand, if for instance we are in a place that we want to leave and cannot, we are more acutely aware of the environment. This would also be the case if we wanted to sleep and there were noises, if we wanted to do something but were not allowed to, if we felt cold and had no covering. In situations like these where the environment causes us problems, we are more aware of it.

If our surroundings lead us to have temptations or to have fear, we will also be aware of the environment, but if we are in a very peaceful, stable environment we tend to forget it. This is common in daily life, like a fish happily swimming in water, not conscious that it needs the water to survive.

That is why we choose a stable, quiet, and simple environment for holding Chan retreats. Our schedule is fixed, and we have rules so that we do not bother or interfere with other people. It is a comfortable environment in which adverse weather conditions do not influence us, and people from outside will not bother us. This allows us to practice peacefully. Beginners need an environment that is very conducive to meditation, one that does not impinge on our minds too much. This enables us to let our minds become unified with the environment. When there are conflicts between the environment and the mind, we are unable to unify mind and environment.

There is a story about a practitioner living where he thought there were too many people and too much noise, so he ran off to the mountains to find a quiet place to meditate. When he got to the mountains he found that the wind made a lot of noise, the brooks

bubbled all the time, and worst of all, great numbers of insects were constantly buzzing and chirping. So he found a cave where he thought he could finally meditate in peace and quiet, but when he started to meditate he became aware of the sounds of his own breathing and the thumping of his heartbeat. He could feel very strongly the sensation of his blood circulating in his veins. He finally concluded that there was no place in the world where it was possible to practice, so he gave up, returned to the city, and told everyone that all this talk about spiritual practice was a deception. Spiritual practice, he said, was not possible in this world. So, what was the problem with this person? Was he right about practice being impossible?

This practitioner let the environment influence him too much. In the term *mozhao*, which is Chinese for “silent illumination,” the word “silent” means letting go of things that could otherwise influence your mind, and “illumination” means being clearly aware of everything that is happening. One has to learn to let go of things.

Magpies and Ox

Most people’s minds are not steadfast like an ox. Instead, their minds are like a flock of magpies chirping in confusion. Which one out of this flock of magpies is your self? Most people would not know if it were any single one or all collectively. For most, the magpies



of the mind are out of control. Instead of a flock of magpies, the mind should be like an ox, well-behaved and disciplined. Then the ox-mind can be trained, and from there it can be dropped. I ask you, is your mind right now like a flock of magpies or like an ox? Probably for most people it is generally a flock of magpies and only occasionally an ox. And some perhaps have never seen their ox-mind.

For example, yesterday everybody was silent but today there is chatting. When someone is chatting, is that person's mind that of a magpie or an ox? From now on when you see that your mind is scattered, ask yourself whether you really want a magpie-mind or an ox-mind. Remind yourself, "If I'm not like an ox, I am just wasting my time here." If someone tries to chat with you, tell yourself, "Here come the magpies again. I really want to be an ox, so I won't flock with magpies." Today I asked you to let go of all forms, and let all affairs come to rest. So, we'll have to repeat this again. I go in English, and you repeat it in Russian. [Laughter] Let go of all forms, and let all affairs come to rest.

[Audience repeats.]

So, now that everyone certainly knows these phrases, please don't chat and don't listen to people who chat with you.

Let's return to Master Huineng's verse. In the line "Mastery of the teachings and mastery of the mind are like the sun in the empty sky,"

"mastery of the teachings" refers to the language and concepts of the Dharma, and "mastery of the mind" refers to the Mind Dharma, or enlightenment. Mastery of the teachings and mastery of mind are ultimately one and the same, and for one who has attained this state, the mind is like "the sun in an empty sky." The sun represents buddha nature or emptiness, and just as nothing can obstruct emptiness, in an empty sky nothing obstructs the brilliance of the sun. There is not actually a thing called buddha nature. However, in realizing emptiness one uses the functions of wisdom and compassion to shine [the light of

"ON ONE HAND, THE SKY IS UNOBSTRUCTED — THIS IS SILENCE. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE SUN IS SHINING ON ALL BEINGS — THIS IS ILLUMINATION."

Dharma] on all the sentient beings. Just as the sun can illuminate everything, the functions of wisdom and compassion can also influence all beings. Huineng's sun is thus an analogy for the functions of wisdom and compassion.

Since there is no obstruction to emptiness, we speak of the empty sky whose lack of obstructions can be called silence. The arising of this sun-like wisdom and compassion through realizing emptiness is called illumination. We can say therefore that this line describes [the realization in the practice of] silent illumination. On one hand, the sky is unobstructed — this is silence; on the other hand, the sun is shining on all beings — this is illumination. When illumination is developed to its highest point, silence will necessarily be present. The reverse is also true: when silence is at its deepest level, illumination will also be present.



Dorothy Weiner

1921 – 2004

Dorothy Weiner, a long time member of the Chan Meditation Center, passed away peacefully in her sleep on August 10, 2004 at the age of 83 in Long Island, New York. Her last words to her daughter Nora were, "I'm fine."

A prayer and memorial service were held in her honor at the Center's Chan Hall on September 26, attended by around 20 of Dorothy's friends and family including her daughters, Nora Chase and Abigail Weiner, and her granddaughter Gabrielle. Also present was Dorothy's longtime friend Bhikkhu Bodhi, abbot of New Jersey's Bodhi Monastery.

The prayer service was officiated by Guo Yuan Fa Shi, the Center's abbot, assisted by Guo Chen Shi. The congregants chanted the Heart Sutra three times, and four of Dorothy's close associates from her days as an active member at the Chan Center spoke fondly of her.

For over ten years, during the eighties and early nineties, Dorothy was an active participant at the Center until her increasing disability made it difficult for her to commute. A prize-winning artist, (her self-portrait is on the facing page) Dorothy made invaluable contributions to the Chan Magazine and the newsletter. Dorothy also painstakingly and accurately transcribed many hours of lecture

tapes, making possible the publication of many of Master Sheng Yen's books and articles.

Ernie Heau, Jimmy Yu, Trish Ing and Stuart Lachs spoke at the service, remembering many of Dorothy's unique and fine qualities. She was described as a warm, kind and generous human being, a person with deep faith and dignity. She was disciplined, self-contained and frank, always speaking her mind. Dorothy's daughter Nora spoke of her mother's love for and devotion to the Center, and Bhikkhu Bodhi concluded the service by chanting blessings from the Metta Sutra in Pali.

The group gathered later for refreshments, and guests viewed some of Dorothy's beautiful ink drawings and paintings. Dorothy will be missed by those who knew and loved her, but we know we will meet again.

Evelyn Talbot, Dorothy's friend of forty years, dedicated this love poem at the memorial:

May I be happy with myself as I am.

May I be peaceful with all things as they are.

May I love myself unconditionally, here and now.

May I live with ease and joy.



In Memory of Dorothy

The Dorothy in my memory was a quiet but solid practitioner. Although she never drew attention to herself at the Center, her continued presence there for so many years contributed to others' sense of stability.

It was always a delight to see her every Sunday. She was punctual to Shifu's Sunday afternoon lectures and was very devoted to Shifu and his teachings. But she was not deferential to him. There's a lot to learn about a practitioner from his or her prostrations or bows. I don't recall ever seeing her doing a full prostration to the Buddha statue or even to Shifu. But I remember her bows. Being next to Shifu as his attendant during those years, I got to observe many people; I remember her bows to Shifu were always sincere and mindful, but unself-conscious. She was fully present being herself, and in her bows Shifu was himself (in that she did not create Shifu into a person he was not).

It was also a delight to see her art work in the Chan Magazine. Her still-life ink drawings (that appeared in the eighties and nineties) had a soft gentleness to them, but one could see they were the fruit of years of practice.

Her physical presence will be missed at the Center, but she will live on in our fond memories. And her practice will bring her to a place where she can continue the path.

An old tree falls here
But a new lotus is born there;
No one can stop the rain
But when it comes,
Grass grow!

– Jimmy Yu (Guogu Pu Sa)





Painting by Dorothy Weiner

Winter 2005

Chan Magazine

“After doing everything that can be done, what would you do next?”

Retreat Report by A.S.

I was really looking forward to attending John Crook’s Western Zen Retreat this April. It was the second such retreat I would be attending with him at the Pine Bush Retreat Center. It had been two years since the last retreat. The first one had been a fantastic experience. I had been really disappointed when the one planned for last year had been cancelled so the wait contributed to my anticipation for this year’s retreat.

I had persuaded my husband to attend, too. It was his first retreat of any kind and I knew he was really nervous. I was anxious about his reaction, that he would think, “Hmm, what does she think is so great about this” or that he would just plain hate it. Plus, we were leaving our kids with our housekeeper and they weren’t too happy about it. All in all, I was pretty keyed up by the time we got to Pine Bush on Friday night.

On the first night, we all talked a little bit about why we had come and what we hoped to gain from the experience. It was really interesting to hear people’s motivations. John said that you should enter the experience without any expectations. He told us if you’ve been on a retreat like this before and had a great experience don’t think “Ah, now I’m going to have the same experience again”, or vice versa. He advised us to just let whatever happens happen. Even though I was intellectually agreeing with him, there was an emotional part of

me that was hoping I would have the same sort of revelatory, dramatic experience that I had had during the last retreat.

That experience had been extremely painful but growth-inducing. It wasn’t just a flash of psychological insight, but an experience that really changed my way of looking at the world and made me able to stop some old, useless behaviors. It wasn’t the sort of experience you could make happen. It was the sort of thing that happened when all the conditions were right. I sat there listening to John, but obviously not really listening, since I was hoping this retreat would also be the same sort of experience.

As the retreat got underway, I watched everyone around me, including my husband, going through all sorts of emotions. I could tell everyone was working hard on their questions. My question seemed easy. I felt calm and while I was uninterested in talking about the answer to my question I was interested in the questions of others. As the time passed though, I got more and more worried. I said to John during my interview, “I’m not getting anywhere. Everyone seems to be working and working. I’m just sitting here.”

I couldn’t stand it by the middle of the third day. I approached John during a break and said, “This is awful. I have to talk to you.” I told him I was just stuck. I was just sitting

and sitting with my question and I completely knew there was nowhere else to go with it. I told him my answer. He said, “This is your new question: After doing everything that can be done, what would you do next?” I felt this overwhelming sense of relief and started to laugh. “Nothing.” I said. “Maybe go lie down.”

John told me I could go and lie down if I wanted, but I didn’t want to. I went and sat in the sun outside of the Chan Hall and burst out laughing and crying at the same time. I felt I knew completely that just being there in that moment, not worrying about what was going to happen, or what had happened, or what was happening around me—just experiencing life as if I had done everything that could be

done—resulted in a sense of relaxation and calm. I felt settled and sort of sheepish. “Gee, I knew that”, I thought. “How could I have forgotten it?”

For the rest of the retreat, I tried to notice how easily I slipped into dreams of what I was going to do, what I did in the past, and what others were doing. How easily I became distracted from what was going on right in front of me at the moment! When I started to slip away, I pulled myself back by remembering the feeling I had sitting in the sun outside of the Chan Hall—when I was laughing because its funny how sometimes you can’t see things that are right in front of you and crying because that’s awfully sad, too.



“Razorwire,

At the end of the river
The young man caught a glimmer of
Dew on razorwire.
A place of concrete crossroads
And many signs—
The cracks beneath one’s feet,
The shattered lives.

The Middle Way becomes clear.
Shards of light through holes
Created by bullets.
In the pinhole of light
Dust motes reside.

Meditation begins,
Becoming Meditation (dhyana).
The tattered book,
A sutra not understood,
Drawn deeper—

No trees in concrete,
Shade found in clouds—
Refuge in past lives
Present unfolds—
To be remembered not.

Vowed to matter—
Pushing forward in footprints
Made from flowers
Openness is found,

Empty,
Entered form is found.
Detached,
Letting go.
Always mindful.
Heart becomes a Temple.
Buddha in a heart-shaped box.

Such peace on concrete,
Surrounded by razorwire,
At the Buddha’s feet we meet.



Concrete, and the Buddha”

Poem, and drawing, by Richard Lee Gregg



The Sound of Silence Pervades the Western Chan Retreat

Retreat Report by J.R.

What is notable about this enchantingly beautiful and remote wooded area of the Dharma Drum Retreat Center is silence, complete silence if you compare it with the continuous 90 decibel shock wave pounding the massively mechanized world of New York City just over 85 miles away. But after five days here, you realize silence can be anything but silent.

At 9 AM Wednesday the 21st of April, Dr. John Crook gave the last of his many illuminating talks in the Chan Center, followed by a closing ceremony expressing gratitude for a successful retreat. At 10 AM conversation broke out among participants signaling the end of the vow of silence and the retreat. Many spoke to each other for the first time outside the structured confines of a communication exercise, an exercise I first thought appeared to compromise the vow of silence. I reminded myself this is my first retreat since taking refuge through Master Sheng Yen in Dallas last year, so I resisted passing judgment. As a new Buddhist, I have much to learn. I realize I may not find myself on the path I'd expected, but I'm confident I'm on the path nevertheless.

The questioning begins

The retreat is a study in contrasts. To the extreme, we circumnavigated our Western

compulsion to speak to one another. The precedent for this does not exist in daily life, at least in my experience living in New York City. Confounding the silence was a seemingly endless series of communication exercises requiring us to answer the same question over and over again. I began looking forward to the quietude of meditation and the peaceful presentation of the Sutra.

Every few hours, we would have a communication exercise requiring the group to break off into pairs with each person asking the other the question, "Who are you?" The person asking the question is to listen without comment to his partner's five-minute answer. The math was incredible: eight sessions a day, two different partners in each session who ask and answer the question in turn two times. By the end of the retreat, most of us had answered the question an astounding 80 times not to mention the 80 times listening to someone else's answer! Imagine telling someone who you are for over six and half hours! Dr. Crook in one of his daily talks offered an interesting insight: he suggested if we pressured someone in our outside personal life to answer this question as relentlessly as we are here, we would most likely lose our friends, our jobs, and may even end up in a messy divorce. As it turns out six and half hours is barely enough time to answer the question.

The context of the question is difficult. I am not facing an airline ticket agent asking for my name, I am facing a stranger whose question is rhetorical and designed to facilitate a process of discovery that requires serious self-reflection. Understandably, this led me into some far-flung probe that in my case created a whopping composite of myself as some transcendental metaphysical being that bore little resemblance to me even in the abstract. I said some very foolish things. Where am I going with this, I thought? And yet it is an important question leading us to a very important place.

A frog shares an epiphany

Dr. Crook, sensing the groups' struggle, talked at length about the peculiarities of Western thinking. He described a culture where ambition and confidence in our problem-solving abilities define who we are as a people. Our society, above all others, believes in the power of logic to unravel all mysteries. He recalled a story from Chan Master Sheng Yen, who spoke of an American with numerous PhD's and a reputation for brilliance who has taken the Western penchant for logic and academic pursuit to an extreme. This man as a novice signed up for a class on Chan taught by the Master himself. By the afternoon, less than five hours after starting this course, this man thought he had come to terms with Zen in a significant way. He asked for an immediate interview with the Master. In the interview this man proclaimed that something big had over come him. The Master agreed and said to him, "Yes, your ego."

The Master's point is well taken: logic and the exaggerated value placed on logic to

solve problems is exactly what I was using to answer this question, although unlike my brilliant Western counterpart, I had no logical answer that satisfied me. I am the person the Chinese Philosopher Chuang Tzu spoke about when he said, "A frog in a well cannot be talked to about the sea." I allowed myself to hear the murmur of surf in the distance—it is time to leave the well and set out for the sea. I have been discussing the shape of the walls that close me in for too long.

Dr. Crook proposed that we not confront the question of who we are head on, but let the question overtake us. This was a turning point for me. I was trying to answer the question instead of living with the question.

Dr. Crook said in one of his talks: Master Sheng Yen was admonished by his Master Bantetsuga Roshi for complaining to him that he did not know English after being told to go teach in America. Roshi told him, "Do you think Zen is taught with words? Why worry about words?" I pondered the significance of this story and how words in the past describing East Asian Buddhism and Chan (Zen) had failed in my mind to connect some imagined logical progression of dots leading to enlightenment. I stood at the edge of this great paradox of religions staring inward at something marvelous, but perhaps for my Western mind unfathomable.

I began taking extended walks in the woods during breaks, resisted asking questions and suppressed the urge to think in words. I tried viewing my surroundings as a young child having no command of language. I found this hard to do but continued to suppress my strong desire to think in terms of language. I found that in the communication exercises

I failed to listen to my partner's answer carefully because I was too distracted by what I was going to say next. I wanted to change this. I not only wanted to hear what was being said, I wanted to experience it.

The little pond; a roaring ocean

On this day I noticed the wind swept through the forest like an invisible wave, creating a sound similar to roaring surf; the wave would pass overhead and gradually disappear into the distance. I never noticed this wave action before. I am center stage and focused on the actions of the forest towering above me. I listen carefully. I hear a sound that I had not been aware of before, a very distant clicking sound that earlier I would have thought of as background noise, the kind of noise that in the city would pass for silence and therefore would not be noticed. The clicking sound is a woodpecker. I felt an incomprehensible joy, and for the first time perhaps since childhood I am completely conscious of this moment. I am here. I am a 5-year-old again visiting the beach for the first time.

Tomorrow may change who I am, where I go and what I become. Life remains uncertain. But for the remainder of the afternoon, there is nowhere on earth I'd rather be than here in this windswept forest. My wife later asked me the question, "So who you are?" I told her I am whom you see, we are here together at this moment and I care about you very much. Beyond that what constitutes my physical being does not matter. What I am now makes me happy. She looked at me in a curious way wondering perhaps if I had just escaped from a block of ice like Houdini. We began to laugh.

I now stand next to my apartment window in midtown Manhattan at 3 A.M. peering out at the familiar sight of the Chrysler Building two blocks away and pondering the concerns of the day ahead. In this predawn darkness, the magnificent lights crowning the building are glowing in the mist of a gentle rain. Even now just outside my window I hear the sound of silence.



**My heart is dust
Scattered yesterday.
Wind on the skin.**

– Chang Jao

The Past

News from the Chan Meditation Center and the DDMBA Worldwide

New Residents at the Chan Meditation Center

On September 20, 2004 the Chan Meditation Center and sangha were enriched by the arrival of three new residents from Taiwan, Guo Ming Fa Shi, Guo Chian Fa Shi and Guo Chii Fa Shi. We are all very encouraged by their joyful and peaceful presence and careful teaching. Being moved to greater mindfulness and gratitude, as practitioners we hope to reciprocate generously by learning from their experience and guidance so that together we can flourish along the Path and help realize Shifu's vision for Dharma Drum Mountain and for spreading Buddhadharma.

Guo Ming Fa Shi, whose name means Fruit of Brightness, will be the Center director in charge of general affairs, public information, and schedules. She comes to take up this position at the Center with the deepest confidence that she will be able to handle whatever conditions and difficulties present themselves, (including improving her English) and be able to fulfill her vow as a Buddhist to serve others. Thirteen years ago when she became a nun, she says, she imagined a life of asceticism within the temple consisting of Dharma talks and praying for the dying. At that time, she related, she had a closed temperament and was afraid of meeting new people and learning something



New Chan Center Director Guo Ming Fa Shi

new. When asked to take on a new job within the sangha she would say, "No, no. Please find someone else. I don't want to do that." Gradually, year by year, through learning the method, hearing the sutras and hearing lectures by Shifu and other masters, she believes her temperament has changed. In a modern sangha under Master Sheng Yen a monastic

must know how to drive, use a computer, and continually learn more and more. Now, if she does anything, she says, she does it for everyone, not for herself. Guo Ming Fa Shi believes that everybody can be transformed through studying Buddha(dharma), becoming calm and peaceful and able to accept any condition or confusing situation.



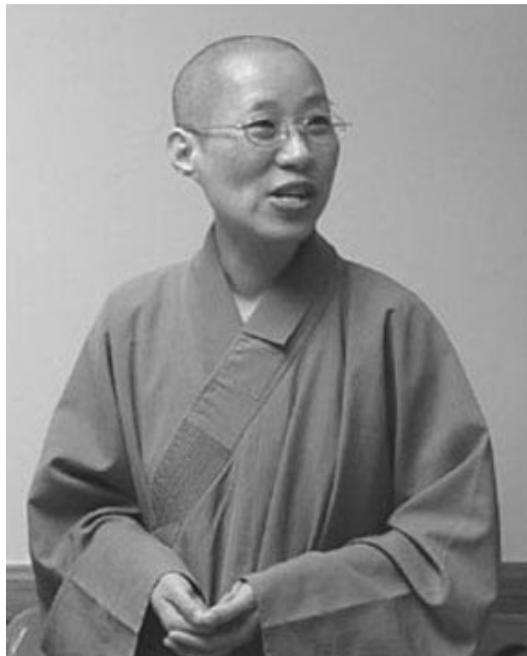
Guo Chian Fa Shi

Guo Chian Fa Shi (Fruit of Humbleness) says she isn't ambitious about doing anything in particular, that she's come to the US Chan Center willing to take on any job. One of the areas she will be managing will be Dharma Drum Mountain Buddhist Association. Also, she will oversee the volunteers, end of life chanting, computers, and Buddha hall care. She enjoys it here. She likes everything about

the people and things and is eager to learn. Guo Chian Fa Shi is currently giving a series of Sunday Dharma talks on the Heart Sutra. She was ordained 10 years ago.

Guo Chii Fa Shi (Fruit of Inspiration) was ordained seven years ago. Her areas of responsibility cover the kitchen, reception, Dharma Drum Publications, Dharma Gatherings, and English-speaking classes. She will take turns with Chang Wu Shi in leading the Tuesday and Saturday sittings. Guo Chii Fa Shi says she has the feeling of impermanence rooted firmly in her mind and has resolved to lead a peaceful life, cultivating an easy-going manner in her interactions with others.

We are truly blessed to have these Dharma teachers among us and look forward to making good progress together.



Guo Chii Fa Shi

Promoting World Peace

Young People Start By Cultivating a Global Perspective and Inner Peace

On July 11, 2004 the World Youth Peace Summit Taipei Conference, organized by Dharma Drum Mountain, was held in the Grand Hotel in Taipei. Chan Master Sheng Yen, founder of Dharma Drum Mountain, Mr. Pai Li Lin, president of Quanta Computer Inc., and Mr. Chang Shiu Yen, president of the Landis Taipei Hotel addressed the 700 young people attending the conference entitled: "Joy, Harmony, Peace – Social Values of Youth Leaders and Their Responsibility to World Peace".

The speakers shared the viewpoint that young people should approach problems from a global perspective and with a peaceful mind, thus promoting peace in all aspects, from interpersonal relations to world affairs. Speaking of the conflicts that arise from globalization, the speakers stressed the importance of creating a global ethics.

Mr. Yen said that the greatest danger in Taiwanese society is that people lack the ability to listen to each other. Being self-centered and subjective, people tend to shun the outside world, isolating Taiwan from the rest of the global community. He suggested opening the gate of understanding to people of different ethnic backgrounds in order to let the world know about positive aspects of Taiwan.

Mr. Yen also suggested that treating nature with respect and humility would result in development in harmony rather than in conflict with the natural world, and that the reconstruction of social values should begin with justice.

Mr. Lin, on the other hand, raised a different perspective. He proposed that Taiwan's approach to globalization is too narrow as compared with Hong Kong or Singapore, and that in order to enhance the competitiveness of Taiwan, people would have to overcome self-centeredness and prejudice in order to learn about other cultures and their technologies.

As to the effects of technology on the environment, Mr. Lin pointed out that whether the advancement of technology benefits human beings or causes environmental disaster depends on our thoughts and behavior. Economic goals based on selfish needs often win out over the altruistic goal of sustainable development.

As the chairman of the World Council of Religious Leaders, Master Sheng Yen has had much experience interacting with people of different countries and ethnic backgrounds. He pointed out that many people are prone to criticize other people's religions and cultures, thus creating conflicts and disputes. Criticizing others makes one unable to learn from their strengths and to share goodness with them. The creation of a friendly world can only be achieved through eliminating prejudices, cultivating understanding, and empathizing with and praising others of different backgrounds. Only then can enemies become friends, joining hands to make the world a friendly environment.

Master Sheng Yen believes that the application of technology should consider the environment, and that if technology is developed based on selfish needs, it ignores the public interest and quality of life for future generations. This belief is the basis of Master Sheng Yen's spiritual environmentalism, which ad-



vocates elevating one's own spirituality in order to rectify social chaos and environmental destruction.

Master Sheng Yen pointed out that in order for global communities to survive and prosper together it is important to find commonality among differing value systems. Peace should be a goal common to people of different religions and cultures. The ideals of joy, peace and harmony would be actualized if people communicated and interacted on common ground, as well as enhancing understanding of their differences.

In closing, Master Sheng Yen reminded his audience that world peace comes from finding inner peace. Once this occurs, one feels safe, and is unaffected by chaotic surroundings. If we all could start with inner peace, we would be unlikely to harm the environment or

each other, and would be able to create peace, harmony and joy within our families, communities, and societies around the world.

The Leadership Training Program

The 2004 World Youth Peace Summit Taipei Conference—Leadership Training Program was hosted by Dharma Drum Mountain from July 23 – 25 at the National Taiwan Science Education Center. Delegates from Africa, China, Hong Kong, Japan and Thailand and more than 100 participants selected from the first phase of the WYPS conferences attended the program led by Venerable Master Sheng Yen, founder of Dharma Drum Mountain, along with distinguished guests Shri Bawa Jain, Chairman of the World Youth Peace Summit, Ms. Dena Merriam, convener of the Global Peace Initiative of Women Religious and Spiritual Leaders, Mr. Ravi Sawhney, the former

Director of the Environment and Sustainable Development for the UN in Bangkok, Cardinal Paul Shan of Kaohsiung, Republic of China, and Venerable Jin Hsin Bikshu, Chairman of the Buddhist Association of the Republic of China.

During the three-day program, the delegates and attendees participated in in-depth discussions on important global issues, organized around the theme of "Eliminating Spiritual Poverty; Pursuing Global Peace", and led by leaders from various sectors of Taiwanese society, including Mr. Pai-Li Lin, President of Quanta Computer Inc., Mr. Raymond So, Chairman of Asia Pacific BBDO Advertising, Mr. Lung-Bin Hau, Secretary-General of The Red Cross Society of The Republic of China, Dr. Ovid J. L. Tzeng, Vice President of Academia Sinica, and Mr. Paul S. P. Hsu, Senior Partner at Lee & Li Attorneys-at-Law and Director of EPOCH Foundation.

The delegates and participants were divided into five discussion panels, each with a general topic: Mutual Respect, Sustaining Human and Environmental Resources, Culture and Globalization, Economic Disparities and Inequalities, and Equality of and Through Technology. During the discussions, the members of each group created a presentation with a mission statement and an action plan which they committed to carrying out in the future.

The conference closed with a signing ceremony of the Declaration of Commitments for Action, whereby the participants were inaugurated as Global Peace Promoters, each of whom has accepted the obligation to transform the ideal of peace into action, and spread the seeds of peace throughout the world.

College Student Zen Camp

The 2004 College Student Zen Camp was held at the Dharma Drum Retreat Center (DDRC) in Pine Bush, N. Y., Aug. 20 – 22. This was the third Zen Camp organized by the College Dharma Association (CDA) of Dharma Drum Mountain Buddhist Association (DDMBA). A total of 36 college students attended.

At about 8 PM on Aug. 20, Rev. Guo Yuan Fa Shi, the abbot of DDRC, welcomed all attendees by briefing them on the schedule and regulations of the Zen Camp and the environment of DDRC. Ms. Iris Wang, the instructor for this Zen Camp, then introduced the CDA and Master Sheng Yen, the founder of DDMBA/DDRC, and his mission and ideals about the organizations. In addition, she asked all attendees to pay a minute's silent tribute to all the volunteers and family members who had made their attendance at this Zen Camp possible. At about 9 PM, the meeting was divided into five groups to discuss the causes and conditions, expectations, and communications that had led to each one attending this Zen Camp.

Promoting this Zen Camp was quite a difficult task. Students received the news through various sources including websites, posters on college campuses, local newspapers and announcements on the Great Dharma Drum TV program in the metropolitan NY area every Saturday night. The attendees of this Zen Camp were mostly American-born Chinese or English-speaking westerners. As a result, the entire Zen Camp was conducted in English. The attendees were all college students majoring in medical science, literature, dancing, art, education, business,

and engineering. Rev. Guo Yuan Fa Shi gave each attendee an orange Buddhist rosary that was worn by most students on the very first day of Camp.

The morning schedule for the first day of Zen Camp was: 6 AM morning call, 6:20 AM Buddhist yoga exercise, 7 AM Buddhist morning service, followed by breakfast and cleanup work. At 8 AM, a beginners' meditation class was conducted by Rev. Guo Yuan Fa Shi. He went into details about the meditation environment, time, tools, postures, methods, mentality, progressive steps, breathing methods, fantasies, and mystical experiences. The afternoon schedule included walking meditation, teaching of fundamental Buddhism and a Buddhist Q&A session. Instructor Wang explained the concept of practice and comprehension and pointed out that the meditation taught in the morning was the practice but comprehending

the intellectual aspect of Buddhism was equally important.

Instructor Wang answered several questions regarding death and the pure land by explaining that Buddhists believe that one's lifetime of practices, habits and memories determine one's rebirth after death. Practicing to attain rebirth in the Pure Land is like working hard to get into an elite school.

Some students considered death far too remote to consider so they asked Rev. Guo Yuan Fa Shi about ways to practice Buddhism in their daily lives. They had various questions, including, "How do I control my temper?" and, "Can I control my materialistic desire for a Ferrari by practicing Buddhism?"

The evening schedule on the 21st was a talk by Instructor Wang on the subject of "Emotions". She explained the concept of the



“five skandhas” (or five human elements), and asked attendees to practice, analyze, and acknowledge their “feelings”. The attendees were divided into five groups and wrote down their emotions, feelings and sensations onto cue cards.

The College Zen Camp ended on the afternoon of the 22nd. Mr. Chong-Hue Yao, the coordinator of this Zen Camp, thanked the instructors and the volunteers and started recruiting new members for CDA, which is made up primarily of current students in college. Due to the high turnover rate of college students, recruiting is an ongoing process.

Bodhi Monastery Lecture

On Wednesday, July 14, 2004, Guo Yuan Fa Shi was invited by the Bodhi Monastery in New Jersey to give a lecture on prajna (wisdom) from the Chan perspective. A question and answer period followed the lecture.

Prior to the lecture, Guo Yuan Fa Shi also taught the eight exercises of moving meditation. Approximately 40 people attended. Bodhi Monastery had a one-week Dharma retreat from July 9 to July 16, 2004.

Mexico Five-Day Retreat

Guo Yuan Fa Shi was invited by Ms. Laura Del Valle to Mar de Jade in Chacala, Mexico to conduct a five-day Chan retreat. Laura has been a long-time student of Master Sheng Yen. There were a total of 25 participants on this retreat, almost all of them from Mexico.



Shifu had previously visited Mar de Jade in October 2001 for a seven-day intensive retreat. One-third of this year’s participants had participated in the 2001 retreat with Shifu. The rest were being introduced to Chan Buddhism and practice for the first time.

Guo Yuan Fa Shi lectured twice a day in English, with Laura translating into Spanish afterward. Although the weather was very hot and humid, all the participants worked very hard and expressed that this had been a very precious and meaningful retreat.

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 College Retreat (DDRC)

Friday, January 6, 8:30 pm –
Monday, January 9, 5 pm

One-day Chan Retreat at CMC

Saturday, January 29, 9 am – 5 pm

Three-day Retreat (DDRC)

Friday, February 18, 8 pm –
Monday, February 21, 5 pm

Two-day Retreat (DDRC)

Friday, March 18, 8 pm –
Sunday, March 20, 5 pm

Chan Practice

Monday Night Chanting

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

Tuesday Night Sitting Group

Every Tuesday, 7 – 9:30 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”

Sunday Lectures at CMC

11 am – 12:30 pm
Topic: The Heart Sutra, by Guo Chian Fa Shi

Wednesday Night Sitting Group at DDRC

Please call 845-744-8114 for details.

Classes at CMC

New Meditation Class Series:

Beginners' Meditation

Two Saturdays, January 15 and 22,
9:30 am – 12 noon, \$40

Intermediate Meditation

Two Saturdays, February 5 and 12,
9:30 am – 12 noon, \$40

Pre-registration required

Beginners' Dharma Class

Please check the website for dates and times

Taijiquan Classes

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

Yoga

Saturdays, January 29; February 5, 19, 26;
March 5, 19; April 2, 16; May 7, 14,
3 – 4:30 pm, with instructor Rikki Asher.
\$10/class or \$80 for all 10 classes

Special Events

Chinese New Year Celebration

Sundays, February 13, 10 am – 4

Chinese New Year Service

Wednesday, February 9, 9 am – 4 pm
Special prayer service in the morning,

and chanting of The Great Compassionate
Repentance in the afternoon.

The Great Compassionate Repentance Chanting

Friday, March 12, 2 – 4 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.

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>

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Davis:

Contact: Grace Wei
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Davis, CA 95616
Tel/Fax: 530-297-1972
Email: ddmbasacra@yahoo.com

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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
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DDMBA Orlando Meditation Group:

Contact: jin Bowden
6082 Red Stage Drive
Port Orange, FL 32128
Tel: 386-322-0524
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Email: mfxl@earthlink.net

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Manhattan:

The Meditation Group
Arpad Hall
323 East 82nd Street (1st and 2nd
Avenue)
Contact: Charlotte Mansfield
Tel/Fax: 212-860-8031
Email: MeditationGroup@yahoo.com
<http://www.MeditationGroup.org>

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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@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.

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 Roszcziszewski, Beata Kazimiarska
Tel/Fax: (22) 7275663, GSM 0-601-205602
Tel/Fax: (22) 6208446, (22) 6498670, GSM 0-601-205602

Sweden:

Svenska Chan Sallskapet (Swedish Ch'an Society):

Contact: Tomasz Holuj, chairman.
Tel: 46-8-716-9295

Switzerland:

Zurich

Teacher: Max Kalin (Guo-yun)
Tel/fax: 411 382 1676
Mobile: 4179 416 8088
Email: MaxKailin@chan.ch
<http://www.chan.ch>

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

Western Ch'an Fellowship:

24 Woodgate Ave. Bury
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Contact: Simon Child, secretary
Email:
secretary@westernchanfellowship.org,
www.westernchanfellowship.org

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Hong Kong:

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

Malaysia:

Dharma Drum Mountain Buddhism Information Centre in Malaysia:

30 Jalan 16/6, 46350 Petaling Jaya,
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Fax: 603-7331413, 603-79600842
Email: kahon@pc.jaring.my
<http://www.media.com.my/zen>

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Dharma Drum Mountain (Singapore Liaison Office):

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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
Tel: 02-2498-7171, 02-2498-7174
Fax: 02-2498-9029
Email: webmaster@ddm.org.tw
<http://www.ddm.org.tw>

Dharma Drum International Meditation Group:

Contact: Guo Chii 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

Australia:

Melbourne

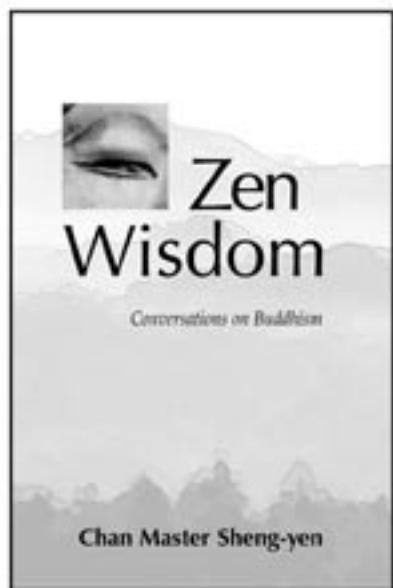
326 Church Road, Templestowe VIC 3106
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Tel: 61-3-4024-1997

Sydney

132 Pennant Hills Road
Normanhurst,
N.S.W 2076, Australia
Tel: 61-2-9489-5677

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New Zealand
Tel: 64-9-4788430

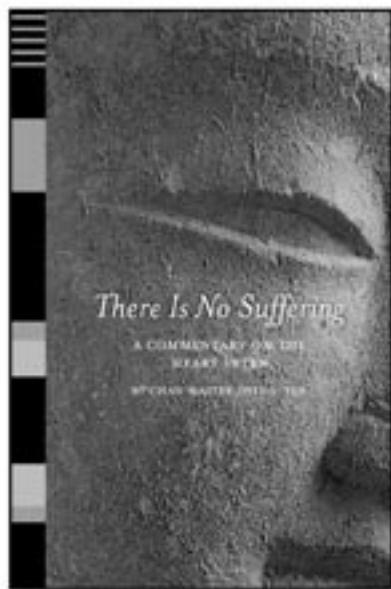


Zen Wisdom

In *Zen Wisdom*, Chan Master Sheng-yen answers questions from his students with clarity and depth. Collected over several years, these conversations focus on the simple yet seemingly elusive principles of Chan (Zen) practice. Combining wisdom with knowledge of the contemporary world, Master Sheng-yen shows us that Chan and Buddha's teachings are still fresh and relevant in the present day.

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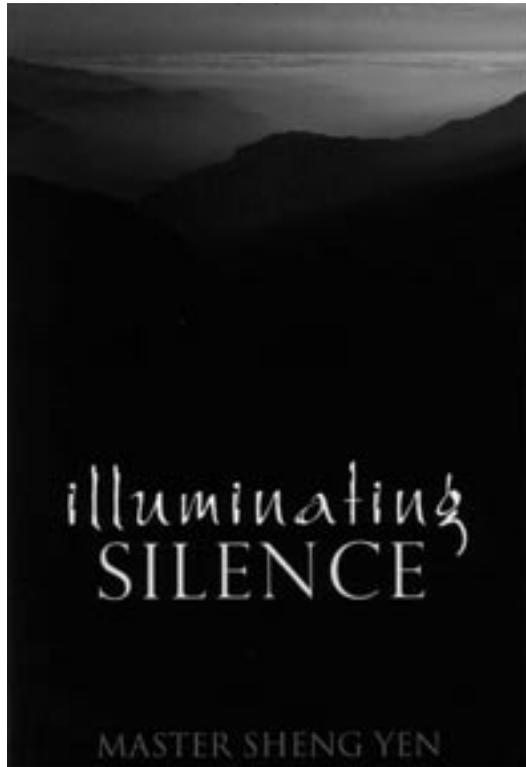


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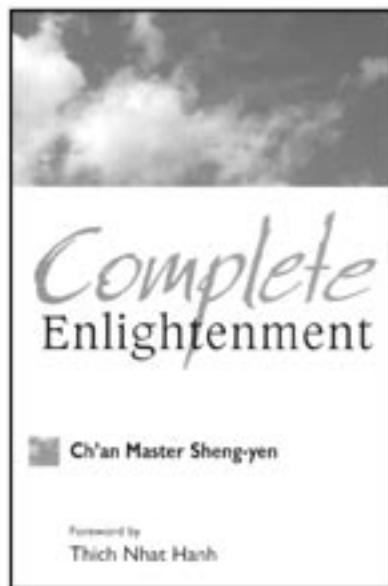
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From WATKINS BOOKS, 2002. 20 Bloomsbury St. London. Available from Watkins,

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An authoritative translation and commentary on The Sutra of Complete Enlightenment, a text that shaped the development of East Asian Buddhism and Chan (Zen). Please enjoy this beautiful translation of the sutra and also the valuable commentaries and instructions offered by this great and rare teacher.

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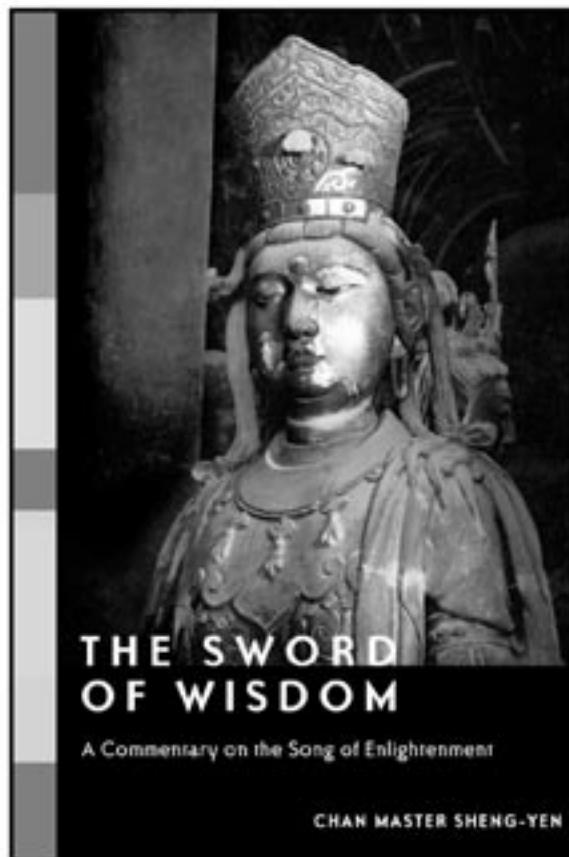
Revered by Buddhists in the United States and China, Master Sheng-yen shares his wisdom and teachings in this first comprehensive English primer of Chan, the Chinese tradition of Buddhism that inspired Japanese Zen. Often misunderstood as a system of mind games, the Chan path leads to enlightenment through apparent contradiction. While demanding the mental and physical discipline of traditional Buddhist doctrine, it asserts that wisdom (Buddha-nature) is innate and immediate in all living beings, and thus not to be achieved through devotion to the strictures of religious practice. You arrive without departing.



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Follow Master Sheng-yen through the Powerful World of Ch'an



The Sword of Wisdom

The Sword of Wisdom is a penetrating commentary on the Song of Enlightenment, a famous Chan text that speaks of proper methods and attitudes for practice. In this book, compiled from a series of lectures delivered during intensive meditation retreats, Master Sheng-yen gives valuable advice and guidance to those who are practicing Chan meditation. His lucid words offer fresh insight into a timeless philosophy that will be beneficial and inspiring to anyone who is interested in Buddhism.

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