

# Chan 禪 Magazine

Autumn 2006



# **Chan Meditation Center**

**Institute of Chung-Hwa Buddhist Culture**

**90-56 Corona Avenue**

**Elmhurst, NY 11373**

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
FLUSHING, N.Y.  
PERMIT NO. 1120

**“Compassion of the third level has no object to which it is directed. There is no purpose or goal...no idea of contribution...one goes wherever and whenever there is a need. One does one’s best, within one’s ability, to help the person in need. When the need is fulfilled, then in one’s mind, there is no trace. It is like a boat travelling through the water – there is no trace left after the wake of the boat .”**

**– Chan Master Sheng Yen,  
from his closing remarks  
to the Women Faith Leaders  
Retreat, Dharma Drum  
Mountain, June, 2006.**

# Chan Magazine

Volume 26, Number 4  
Autumn, 2006

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. Please make checks payable to Chan Meditation Center; 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](mailto:ddmbaus@yahoo.com), or the magazine at [chanmagazine@gmail.com](mailto:chanmagazine@gmail.com), or visit us online at: <http://www.chancenter.org>.

## **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, Mike Morical, Bruce Rickenbacker, Wei Tan, Tan Yee Wong (Chang Ji Shi)

## **Administrator**

Chang Wu Fa Shi

# Chan 禪 Magazine

<b>From the Editor</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The Four Steps to Magical Power</b>	<b>6</b>
<i>The first of two lectures on the third group of practices known together as the Thirty-Seven Aids to Enlightenment, by Chan Master Sheng Yen</i>	
<b>Wind At Rest</b>	<b>11</b>
<i>Poem by Chang Wen Shi</i>	
<b>Life Koans and Retreat Experience</b>	<b>12</b>
<i>Part two of a Dharma talk given at the Chan Meditation Center in Elmhurst, NY by Dr. John Crook</i>	
<b>Compassionate Mind, Compassionate World</b>	<b>21</b>
<i>The 2006 Women Faith Leaders Retreat: Closing Remarks by Chan Master Sheng Yen; Report by Rebecca Li</i>	
<b>The Past</b>	<b>26</b>
<i>News from the Chan Meditation Center and DDMBA</i>	
<b>The Future</b>	<b>32</b>
<i>Retreats, classes, and other upcoming events</i>	
<b>Chan Center Affiliates</b>	<b>34</b>

# From The Editor

The Ng Fook (“Five Good Fortunes”) Funeral Home on Mulberry Street shares the block with the Cheung Sang (“Long Life”) and Wah Wing Sang (“Eternal Life”) funeral corps. Funeral homes have dominated this southernmost block of Mulberry for generations, though they were Italian before they were Chinese – Ng Fook, prior to 1976, was Bacigalupi.

I’ve been here before – Ng Fook was the site of services, in 1988, for my Si Gung (my gongfu teacher’s teacher, usually rendered “Grandmaster,” though that’s an aggrandizing translation – it really means a *si*, teacher, who is genealogically speaking like a *gung*, grandfather, being from two generations prior.)

This time I’m here for the funeral of one of the dearest people I’ve ever known – Shung Lee, who lived for over 80 years around the corner on Mott Street, in the same apartment in which his father had practiced calligraphy, and written poetry, and waited for our government to allow his wife to immigrate, and in which Shung and his family, with their great generosity, had always made me so welcome.

Shung was truly a pillar of his community, not in the sense of having great power or influence, but in that he was the patriarch of a family that embodied the entire history of New York’s Chinatown, including elements of Chinese history that had been long lost in the homeland. Shung was a native New Yorker down to his accent, but he spoke the very particular Cantonese his father had brought from

Toih Saan village. “Wow!” recent immigrants from Toih Saan would say when they heard his Cantonese, “I haven’t heard that dialect since my grandfather died.”

Ng Fook is known for its sensitivity to tradition – not only the difference between Western and Chinese funerary traditions but the differences between one village’s and another’s – and Shung’s family has taken care that his funeral properly represent his standing, his heritage, the expectations of his community and extended family. The traditions followed include many sequences of three bows and offerings of incense, the careful arrangement of immediate family members by generation and seniority, the burning of offerings (a way of sending them into the spirit world), our turning our backs to the grave as the coffin is lowered, our receipt of a sweet and a lucky coin as we leave the gravesite.

And they include a brass band – a decidedly Italian brass band – four guys – two trumpets, a trombone and a snare – in blue uniforms with hats – playing mostly 19<sup>th</sup>-century hymns, in march time, punctuated by an occasional musical reference, like “Off We Go, Into the Wild Blue Yonder” to represent Shung’s service in the Army Air Corps during World War II.

This is not exactly new to me – I spent the eighties and nineties more in Chinatown than out, and I’ve seen and heard this before – but somehow my intimacy with Shung and his family makes me want to understand it better than I do. I’m sure I’ve seen this kind of band in films of post-war Sicily – at times the

upbeat tempo makes me think of New Orleans – I assume it has something to do with the proximity of Little Italy to Chinatown, but I've never noticed much cultural cross-pollination between those two communities before...I want to know more. So when the musicians go on break, I go and talk to them.

I don't learn much; basically, they confirm what I already know. Yes, it's Italian – one of the musicians knows of this tradition in Calabria. Yes, it's a borrowing from Little Italy, from the days when the Chinese needed to be buried but the Italians still owned all the funeral homes. I learn that it's not unique to New York – one of the guys in the band has played in Chinatown San Francisco as well. But that's all they know – the story of when and how this Italian branch was grafted onto this Chinese rootstock planted in American soil may just be lost.

And perhaps it's unimportant. Whatever the causes and conditions were, the karmic consequence is here in front of me in all its complexity. The Buddhist bows, the Confucian hierarchies, the Christian hymns all function perfectly to facilitate the grief of this Chinese-American family with the Western in-laws and their stunningly beautiful hybrid children and grandchildren. By the time we sit down to lunch, nearly a hundred of us, in the neighborhood restaurant below the apartment, it's tangible how much better everyone feels. The rituals, wherever they came from, have done their work.

\* \* \*

*PLEASE NOTE: Chan Magazine has changed its e-mail address. From now on please e-mail us at:*

**chanmagazine@gmail.com**

*We'll continue to check for mail at the old yahoo address until October 1.*



# The Four Steps to Magical Power

by

**Chan Master Sheng Yen**

*The Thirty-Seven Aids to Enlightenment consist of seven groups of practices towards enlightenment, especially as followed in the Buddhist Theravada tradition. Beginning with the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, a practitioner makes progress through the groups, culminating in the Noble Eightfold Path. In previous issues of Chan Magazine we presented the first two of the seven groups—the Four Foundations of Mindfulness and the Four Proper Exertions. In this issue we present the first of two parts concerning the third group, the Four Steps to Magical Power. The two articles are based on lectures by Master Sheng Yen at the Chan Meditation Center, New York. The lectures, given on October 20 and November 5, 2002, were orally translated by Rebecca Li, transcribed by Bruce Rickenbacher, with editing by Ernest Heau.*

## **To Master Our Own Mind**

The Four Steps to Magical Power are also called by names such as the Four Steps to the Power of Ubiquity, the Four Steps to Unlimited Power, and the Four Kinds of Samadhi. The Sanskrit riddhipada means “steps to (magical) power.” Its Chinese title, si ru yi zu, speaks of a mind that can accomplish whatever it wants to. This is a mind that is master of itself, free and at ease. There is a Chinese saying: “Eight out of nine things that happen to us do not match our expectations.” Why does so much of what happens to us not match our expectations? It is because we are usually not the master of our own mind. We think about what we should not, and we can’t bring ourselves to think about what we should. Both habits contribute to our not

gaining control of our lives. We do not learn from the past and have no clear plan for the future; therefore, we continue to make mistakes. Constantly faced with problems, our life is filled with adversity. Not being able to control our mind, we let small problems become big problems; not being able to reach our goals, we are ill at ease. However, with correct practice we can gradually eliminate these obstacles and more will happen according to our expectations.

## **The Four Enhanced Phenomena**

The Mahayana path to buddhahood can be likened to a journey of five stages. In the first stage we gather the provisions we will need for the journey. In terms of the path, this means practicing the Four Foundations





of Mindfulness and the Four Proper Exertions. In the second stage we actually set off on the path to buddhahood. This stage consists of practicing the Four Steps to Magical Power, and it is characterized by the four enhanced phenomena. The third stage is realizing dhyana, in which one directly perceives that the true nature of the self is that of a buddha. This is the stage of the arhat, or saint. The fourth stage is to actualize the bodhisattva path in which one practices dhyana to realize samadhi and wisdom. This enables one to use skillful means to deliver sentient beings. The fifth stage of the journey is complete liberation in buddhahood.

Before talking about the Four Steps to Magical Power, I want to briefly describe the four enhanced phenomena of warmth, summit, forbearance, and supreme in the world. These phenomena grow out of the practice and validate that one has planted them as virtuous roots. "Warmth" means that one's mind is becoming soft and gentle and that the harshness is receding. "Summit" means that having gotten rid of harshness, one's mind has ascended to the peak, so to speak. "Forbearance" means that one will not bring harm to oneself or others. "Supreme in the world" means that one has transcended worldliness and is approaching the stage of an arhat.

At the level of summit, one's mind has become soft and gentle, not just sometimes but at all times. People often mistakenly assume that if one can enter samadhi, one's problems will go away. Another misunderstanding is that having had a glimpse of enlightenment, one no longer has vexations. The truth is that only when wisdom and dhyana arise together are we at a stage where we will not

bring vexation to ourselves or others. Until then, though we may be at ease with a joyous mind, we are not yet liberated because we are still attached to the idea of a self. To attain the summit level is not really that high but is still very good. It speaks of spiritual power, and it is at this level that we begin the practice of riddhipada.

## Two Kinds of Power

It is possible to generate two kinds of powers through practice. The first is supernatural powers through which one can transcend ordinary physical limitations. Examples would be the ability to transport oneself to different places and times, to perform alchemy, or to become invisible. If you were invisible you could take whatever you wanted and not get caught. Would this be stealing? I guess you could call it miraculous stealing. [Laughter] One could become rich without working. But if you had such supernatural powers, would you use them that way? I think not. These are not the kinds of powers one would use on the dhyana path.

The second kind of power one can generate is freedom and ease of mind. To attain that state we practice dhyana, which is the reason these practices are also called the Four Kinds of Samadhi. There are differences between the non-Buddhist and the Buddhist practices of samadhi. In non-Buddhist meditation, one's goal is to stop wandering thoughts, to enter samadhi, and to experience freedom from vexation. However, coming out of samadhi, one will again experience wandering thoughts and vexation. So, life is good in samadhi, not so good out of it.

The Buddhist approach is different in that we first practice the Four Foundations of Mindfulness and the Four Proper Exertions. Through these contemplations we generate wisdom. Whether or not we enter samadhi, we can still use this wisdom to lessen our vexations and to reduce conflicts and contradictions within our mind. This is why we begin with the Four Foundations and Four Proper Exertions. Buddhism emphasizes the need to practice in order to realize one's own buddha-nature. This does not mean that someone who perceives buddha-nature is no longer subject to vexation. After experiencing buddha-nature for the first time, one still has habits and propensities that can lead to impure thoughts and impure conduct; greed and aversion may still arise. However, one is at least able to see clearly that one's mind still cannot completely control the arising of vexations. At that point it becomes very important to practice samadhi.

To summarize, in the stages of practice toward enlightenment, we cultivate wisdom through contemplation, and when wisdom arises, we practice samadhi to develop freedom and ease. This is the kind of power we want to develop through the Four Steps to Magical Power, not supernatural powers.

## The Four Steps to Magical Power

Collectively, the Four Steps to Magical Power are called riddhipada in Sanskrit, literally, steps (feet) to power. The first step is chanda-riddhipada, concentration of will, the second is virya-riddhipada, concentration of exertion, the third is citta-riddhipada, concentration of mind, and the fourth is mimamsa-riddhipada, concentration of inquiry, or investigation.

“AFTER EXPERIENCING  
 BHUDDA-NATURE FOR THE  
 FIRST TIME, ONE STILL HAS  
 HABITS AND PROPENSITIES  
 THAT CAN LEAD TO IMPURE  
 THOUGHT AND IMPURE CON-  
 DUCT; GREED AND AVERSION  
 MAY STILL ARISE . . . AT THIS  
 POINT IT BECOMES VERY  
 IMPORTANT TO PRACTICE  
 SAMADHI.”

Concentration of will is the intense desire to attain the wondrous and supreme dhyana. This intense longing will cause one to prepare one's mind accordingly and inspire one to practice hard. Translated into Chinese as “desire,” chanda can have a negative as well as a positive meaning. On the one hand it can mean greed, but as a step to concentrative power, chanda also denotes a hope or vow to attain the supreme dhyana. This vow is

essential to overcome the six obstructions to practice: drowsiness, scattered mind, idleness, laziness, forgetfulness (of one's practice), and wrong view. The will to attain the supreme dhyana is the best antidote to laziness. So, when you are practicing and begin to feel lazy, please give rise to the aspiration to attain the supreme dhyana.

Concentration of exertion means one is equipped with a strong vow to attain the supreme dhyana [where wisdom manifests], and therefore, one diligently applies the method of practice. Earlier, we discussed the Four Proper Exertions as correct attitudes while practicing the Four Foundations of Mindfulness to give rise to wisdom. Here, we use the attitude of the Four Proper Exertions to give rise to diligence in dhyana.

Concentration of mind means being focused on the practice of dhyana. We have spoken of the need to practice dhyana diligently. But what do we use to practice dhyana? We use the mind of the present moment, keeping the mind on the present moment, and only on the present moment. This is the mind that gives rise to dhyana, or wisdom. The mind of ordinary sentient beings is selfish and full of vexation. Nevertheless, it is this same mind that we practice with, and it is the same mind as that of an arhat. However, when we start practicing dhyana, we cannot become pure immediately; we still have wandering thoughts, impure thoughts, and selfish thoughts. Originally the mind is scattered, but when it is continuously on the method, it is on the path to dhyana.

Concentration of inquiry means using wisdom to observe whether our mind is in the proper state. As we said, the proper state is “summit,” where the entire mind is soft and gentle, without harshness. If we see that the mind is selfish and impure, then it is not in the proper state, and we need to correct it right away. In practicing dhyana, we encounter the six obstructions. As long as there is one obstruction remaining, it is not the proper state of mind and not the Right Meditation of the Eightfold Noble Path. Therefore, when we speak of the

proper state of mind for meditation, we also mean the absence of self-centered thoughts. At the stage of practicing the Four Steps to Magical Power one focuses on eliminating laziness. We talked earlier about the strong will to practice the supreme dhyana as a way to overcome laziness. Here we also speak of observing whether one has the proper state of mind as a way of dealing with laziness.

We have talked about “supreme in the world,” where one is liberated from samsara as an arhat. Though the mind will no longer give rise to unwholesome activity or vexation, there still remain residual habit energies until one attains buddhahood. In other words, there are still subtle obstructions. When all obstructions have finally been overcome, one has attained buddhahood.

*Editor's note: The conclusion of this article will appear in the next issue of Chan Magazine.*



# Wind at Rest

Sitting silently.

Resting this wearied form, a body aching from vexations.

Ceasing the turning of thinking,

Not dreaming, not wishing, not fearing,

The mind naturally settles and clears.

Like the calming of a storm,

After passing through mountain forests,

The winds slowly fade,

And no longer sway the trees,

The forest is still and bright.

The sound of silence penetrates throughout all ten directions.

— *Shi Chang Wen*

*Chang Wen is a resident monk of Dharma Drum Mountain,  
and wrote this short poem after attending a Silent Illumination  
retreat at the DDM Chan Hall, June 16<sup>th</sup> 2006*

# Life Koans and Retreat Experience

by  
Dr. John Crook

*The following is Part 2 of a Dharma talk given by Dr. John Crook at the Chan Meditation Center in Elmhurst, NY, on March 9, 2006. The talk was transcribed by Sheila Sussman and edited for the magazine by David Berman with the assistance of Dr. Crook.*

*Dr. John Crook was Master Sheng Yen's first European Dharma heir. He is a biologist, a pioneer in the behavioural evolutionary ecology of birds, primates and man, and is the Teacher of the Western Chan Fellowship in the United Kingdom.*

Now I want to talk a little bit about the old koan stories, and how they can be used today. Many of these old koan stories are quite complex and long, so I think the best way to start is to tell one story with which we can work. Here's a rather nice one that raises some difficulties.

*In the old days in China, monks used to wander around from monastery to monastery, visiting masters and finding out what they could learn, and also getting a free meal or two, no doubt. Anyway, one day there was this monk, pretty scruffy, turns up at a monastery, opens the door, goes into the Chan hall, looks around – it's a beautiful Chan hall, statues of the Buddha, scrolls on the wall, wonderful calligraphy – he looks around and mutters, "Bah! Ugh!" turns around and walks out. But when he gets to the front gate, he thinks, "Oh, I was a bit hasty, I think I'll go back." So back he goes. By this time the master has come into the Chan hall and is sitting on his throne. The master raises his fly whisk in*

*welcome – and what does the monk do? He says, "BAH! UGH!" and walks out. This time he doesn't come back. Afterwards the master says to the guest master, "What's happened to that noisy fellow?" And the guest master says, "He's gone away!" And the master says, "That guy will end up building monasteries on the tops of mountains while abusing and swearing at the Buddhas and patriarchs."*

Now – here's a question for you: in making this remark, was the master approving or disapproving of the monk? Hmm, think about it.

This is a useful story because it's clearly about a split between earthy Zen practice, just being oneself in the wilderness, you know, lighting a fire, doing your own cooking and living in a pretty primitive way but in total honesty with nature, and, by contrast, coming into an institutionalized hall with all the decorations and architecture and pomp and circumstance, masters in glowing robes

with fly whisks, “BAH! What do I want with all that stuff?”

So there's a problem here: What indeed is the place of beautiful buildings in Chan? But you could put the problem round the other way, and say, surely this man should have better manners than that! You could argue either from the point of view of somebody who says, “All these holy places are important, one must never insult a temple, one must always make one's three prostrations before one crosses the floor and do all that, you can't just shout ‘Bah!’ and walk off. That's disgusting behavior!” On the other hand, you might say, “Oh, I don't bother about these temples, mountain-tops are much better for me, caves are the proper place, I just like to live in caves, and eat nettles like Milarepa.”

Which way is right? Which view is right? Are they both right? How do they relate? You're faced with a duality here. That's the subtlety of the koan. It throws you into a duality: either/or. Where is the third place? If you find the third place, you've solved the koan.

OK, that's just the example of one particular koan and the way in which it throws up dilemmas for those who want to practice. When the master says, “Ah, that guy, one day he'll build monasteries on the tops of mountains and he'll shout curses at the Buddhas and the patriarchs!” the meaning is not clear. Was he displeased with the man? Or did he actually imply that this man was going to be one of his Dharma heirs? Which was it? Or was it neither of those, but something else? Hmm!

It's a beautiful koan. Now you can spend retreat after retreat thinking about that one. But the way to solve koans is not through

thinking about them but rather through trying to place your self in the picture.

In our Western Chan Fellowship, we have created a way of working with koans that we think suits the Westernized mind. Why? Well, we Westerners, together with Chinese who've had Western educations, are taught to think. To think, to reason, to argue, to rationalize, to explain. Above all, to explain. Everything has to be explained. The media are always on about explaining why this happens, why that happens, why so-and-so did this, always why, why, why, explain, explain, explain, explain. One day I went to Shifu (I was thinking about my own practice as a scientist) and I said to him, “The trouble with me, Shifu, is that I'm always trying to explain everything!” And Shifu said, “Exactly, John, that's why your practice should be silence.” Thank you, Shifu. End of interview.

Well, knowing that not only I, but at least most high school-educated Westerners, and certainly most university-educated Westerners, have this tremendous addiction to explaining everything, and because koan stories are not easily explained, I thought well, why don't we resurrect all these old koan stories and let people try and explain them, and see what happens when they get totally stuck. That would be interesting!

There was another reason why I wanted to do this, and that is that nowadays the full koan story is not often used on retreats. Shifu, for example, although he will talk about koan stories in his sermons, prefers to use huatou in actual retreats, and of course, we also often do the same. Huatou are very useful. But I wondered why, why don't we also make use of these extraordinary old stories?

So I thought, let's have a retreat in which we present a number of different koan stories and let people choose which one they want to try to understand? So, we created a list of about eight koan stories, all of them pretty tricky, and asked participants to go away with this piece of paper, read these stories, and choose one of them as the koan to work on for a ten-day retreat, or, usually in our case, a six-day retreat. People have a whole morning to go outside and read these koan stories. Eventually everyone has chosen a koan story.

Now what's happening here? What is it that causes somebody to choose a particular koan story rather than another one? Participants

have been asked to choose a koan story by finding out which story seems to be telling them something. You may not know what it is, but it's hinting at something, it's telling you something, it's intriguing, it's puzzling, it's difficult. Now, only you can do this, no one else. Therefore, when a koan interests you in that way, it is actually triggering something concerning your "life koan."

Do you see the point? Nobody else can choose your koan, only you can choose your koan, so when you choose a koan, it's you that does it, and there must be some kind of relationship between your life koan, that's to say, the whole of your life story, and this koan, which





is saying something to you, even though you don't know quite what it is.

Participants are then asked to sit with their koans and they are told, "OK, you're all Western-educated, now, explain this koan!" So they all set to work thinking about it. After a while we say, all explanations are going to be wrong, but keep trying. You will find you can explain this story in about ten different ways. How many have you got? Five. How many have you got? Three. And every time you've got an explanation, realize that it cannot be the full story because you're not dealing with something that can be explained rationally – these stories are paradoxes. We need to know what a paradox is. A paradox is something like a riddle because it's pointing outside itself at something else. What is it hinting at? And this will be something to do with the solution of your life koan. By the time you've worked six or seven days on a koan and discarded all the experiences and all the explanations that have come up, you end up in the "great doubt" that is described for classical koan work. You end up fixated on maybe just two words of the story. Hmm. Really stuck.

Those words have got stuck in your head. You can't get rid of them. They go round and round and round. The story has almost disappeared. You're in what's called the great doubt. And that great doubt is something which becomes deeply personal, it's in your own heart and you don't know why or wherefore. It's working at levels of the mind that are not accessible to reason. But then, something happens. It twists around, and you say, Oh, of course! And I can't tell you what, because actually the "Of course!" in its first manifestation is not in words.

I put it to you that what has probably happened is that the participant has dropped out of time. Matters of past worries and future hopes have disappeared and in the moment of dropping out of time, he or she sees the present moment coloured by the mystery of the paradox they've been working with. When in interview the master asks, "What is it?" they'll come up with some phrase or expressions which may show insight. If the master feels, yes, it fits, he'll say, fine, three prostrations to the Buddha, and have a nice day, enjoy – or no, take it further or whatever.

These koans become very involving. This evening I could cook up some koans and we might all try to explain them, but we haven't got time to work through a koan to this extraordinary moment when, in the intensity of the great doubt, the thing dissolves and drops away and leaves us timeless, spacious, gasping out some word that will just have to do. How does the master know? Not verbally. It's in the non-verbal appearance that he sees whether one is released into a realization. The koan is gone. The eye energy is brilliant. The facial expression is totally – how shall I put it? – different. Maybe delighted, maybe just very, very open. Maybe an expression of wonder.

When people solve koans in this way, the real test as to whether it's a solution or not is whether it has any subsequent effect on their lives. And people for whom the solution of the koan has really and truly worked say, "The Dharma is no longer a puzzle to me, I understand the Dharma. It's quite straightforward." Or they will say, "Life is actually OK. I may have trouble again, but I know that life, basically, is OK, in spite of the fact that it's still difficult." In other words, some

kind of space in life itself has emerged, and we could call that a fruit of the Dharma, this sense of belonging to life and manifesting life. And of course, when you're in that frame of mind, you can't make a mistake because such a frame is closely related to love, a very curious kind of love which is disinterested, a love which is for everything and everybody. When you meet people and you are in that state of mind, you'll be surprised that they will start talking to you as if they've known you since you were born, because intuitively they will sense that you are completely open to hear what they have to say. You no longer have a side, no prejudice.

But let us be careful, we're in danger of speaking idealistically here, because these insights, after all, are quite rare. It also has to be said that they may be of rather short duration, because the difficulties of life don't get away so easily. But, once one has seen something of that kind a Dharma truth has arisen and one can work with that.

I'd like to finish this talk by talking about one or two of these koans. It's worth looking at them even in this quite trivial way because there are different kinds of koans. When I say there are different kinds, I mean they often work in rather different ways. So, although we cannot solve these koans here – I warn you, we're not solving koans here. We cannot solve them because that's beyond words, and I'm just talking words. We can however explore their nature and what they point towards. Here's a nice story:

*It was a beautiful summer's day, really lovely. The windows of the Chan hall were wide open, and the monks were all sitting there waiting for the arrival of the master. The master ar-*

*rives, looks around the Chan hall, climbs into his seat and raises his fly-whisk to begin his talk. At that moment, a bird in the garden begins to sing. The master holds up the stick. The bird goes on singing. The monks all wonder what's going to happen next. The bird goes on singing. Finally, the bird stops. The master puts down the fly-whisk and says, "O monks, that is all for today," and returns to his room.*

Hmm, did any of the monks get it? You can imagine these monks. There will be those monks who think, what is the old so-and-so on about? This is ridiculous! Why doesn't he give his sermon? They hadn't even heard the birdsong, of course. Other monks will think, well, he must be in a peculiar mood today, maybe he needs an aspirin. Other monks, however, might hear the birdsong and they might think that that's better than any sermon, and they will experience something new. Maybe what they will experience is the total presence of the birdsong in the presence of that present moment, and in that total openness to that flowing now-ness, they may see something which goes beyond the Chan hall, beyond the bird, and indeed, beyond the master. Meanwhile, the master has gone back to his room, and I'll bet he's having a chuckle.

Now, what kind of a koan is that? Well, it belongs to a kind of koan that evokes a state of mind. You see, it's not like the "bah!" one. It's not that the master has made some statement that can be interpreted in one of two ways. It's not that sort of koan. This is a koan that deliberately evokes the state of mind of someone who is able to fall into the beauty of the present moment and catch what the master is pointing out. We could call that type of koan

an “evocation of a state.” And because it’s rather a poetic story, we can, I think, get some sense of its meaning. It’s a beautiful story.

Here’s another one. This belongs to a type we might call “insight through a word.” *The story goes like this: The Buddha was out walking with the gods. They were walking along, having a good chat, when the Buddha lifted up his finger, pointed to the ground and said, “That would be a good place to build a sanctuary.” And Indra, the king of the gods, picked a blade of grass and stuck it there, and said, “The sanctuary is built!”*

End of story. Hmm. What is the sanctuary? Why is a blade of grass sufficient for the sanctuary? What was the Buddha up to? That koan has actually turned out to be quite a popular one in the group I lead in Bristol. There’s one lady there who was very troubled with her life, and was saying, I want to know what the Buddha refuge is. So I gave her this koan. She loved it! She’s still carrying it around with her so far as I know. She discovers a sanctuary in her mind every time she tells the story to herself. The sanctuary? Well, of course, herself! Why not? Where else? If you have a sanctuary, where else can it be? Only one place.

Here’s another one. This is really quite tricky, because it refers to Buddhist philosophy, but

I’ll give it to you because some of you might have been reading a bit of philosophy and might enjoy this. How does it go? Oh yes. It’s about the start of the Mahayana. You know, there’s the Theravada, and then the later schools of Buddhism, the Mahayana, developed. *So, the gods were having a wonderful celebration because the Mahayana had started, and they were all rushing around, drinking orange juice, saying to one another, “How wonderful today! This is the second time the Tathagata has proclaimed the Dharma!*

*Whoopee!” The Buddha was sitting next to Subhuti. He nudged Subhuti and he said, “It’s not the second time, Subhuti, because there never was a first time.”*

Hmm. How about that? This points at emptiness. So, here we have a koan that requires you to pick up a Dharma insight. You may or you may not get it, but it’s a good koan.

Here’s another one. It’s a story of great Master Joshu who came to see equally great Master Linji. *So Joshu comes into the monastery, and he finds that Linji is washing his feet! And Joshu, a bit clever, says, “What is the meaning of Bodhidharma’s coming from the West?” which, after all, was a very common question. Linji says, “Oh, just now I happen to be washing my feet!” So Joshu came closer, expecting to hear more. Linji looks up and says, “So! Do I have to toss out another ladleful of dirty water!?”*

“WHEN WE SEE INTO  
THE BHUDDA NATURE, THERE  
ARE ACTUALLY NO WORDS,  
BECAUSE THE SEEING ITSELF  
IS BEYOND LANGUAGE. SO WE  
TRY, WE STRUGGLE, TO CRE-  
ATE WORDS TO TALK ABOUT  
IT, BUT ACTUALLY THERE ARE  
NO WORDS. THERE’S TIME-  
LESS SPACIOUSNESS”

Hmm. This is a koan that points out that actually the experience of Dharma is wordless. We've been talking about timelessness and spaciousness of the Dharma. When we see into the Buddha nature, there are actually no words, because the seeing itself is beyond language. So we try, we struggle, to create words to talk about it, but actually there are no words. There's timeless spaciousness.

Last one to leave you with something to take away. I like giving you this one because it's about Shifu when I was with him in London. In telling the story I will refer to myself as Layman John. *Shifu and Layman John were walking in Westminster Square, which you*

*may know is in the heart of London. A great swirl of traffic was passing around it, the engines were roaring, the horns were hooting. Suddenly, in amongst the turning wheels, Layman John saw a pile of horse dung, neatly stacked exactly as it had fallen, and quite undisturbed by the traffic. It seemed incredible that a living horse could have passed that way in all that traffic and left so clear and neat a testimony to its passage! Layman John drew Shifu's attention to the unlikely pile, saying, "Shifu! Look! Here's a pile of horseshit! But, where's the horse?" Shifu looked at it and said, "What need have we of the horse?"*



# Compassionate Mind, Compassionate World

## Women Faith Leaders Retreat

*From June 20-22, at Dharma Drum Mountain, Taiwan, DDM held a Women Faith Leaders Retreat entitled "Compassionate Mind, Compassionate World." The retreat was organized by Ms. Dena Merriam, Vice-Chair of the Millennium World Peace Conference of Religious and Spiritual Leaders. What follows are two documents of that retreat: First, the text of Master Sheng Yen's closing remarks, translated live by Rebecca Li and edited for the magazine by David Berman; second, Rebecca Li's report of her encounter with Ven. Chao Hwei, a Buddhist nun who advocates for social justice and particularly for the equality of women.*

### Closing Remarks by the Most Venerable Master Sheng Yen

Honored Venerables, women leaders and guests,

Dena asked me to speak about Compassion and its practice today. In Chinese culture, the female form symbolizes compassion. In addition, mothers in Chinese society are always portrayed as compassionate. Hence, in Buddhism, the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara (Guanyin Bodhisattva) symbolizes compassion; therefore in the eyes of the public, Avalokitesvara takes on the form of a female.

During Shakyamuni Buddha's lifetime, men and women in Indian Buddhist societies were treated as equal. However, in most societies and religions, this has not necessarily been true, even in Chinese Buddhist societies today. Why do men and women enjoy equal

status in Taiwan, especially in Taiwanese Buddhism? Firstly, it is because women make up most of the Buddhist devotee population, and have made many great contributions to Buddhism in Taiwan. Secondly, there are individuals working for the equality of women in Taiwanese Buddhism. Venerable Chao Hwei, who is here on retreat with us, is a great example of these individuals.

Compassion can have a narrow or wide scope and a shallow or deep level. Compassion of the narrowest scope is represented by ordinary love, the love for our immediate family, love for our extended family, love for our relatives, love for our friends and love for our immediate community. When we love these people unconditionally, without expecting to receive anything from them, then this is compassion. If we expect to receive something in exchange for our love, for example, if a man and woman love each other because they want the other to love them back, then



this is not compassion. This is an investment. You invest because you hope to get a return. This is merely a social exchange of love and not of compassion. Compassion, in the narrowest scope, is unconditional giving to those around us.

Compassion of a wider scope, or higher level, is the love one has for all people in this world. This compassion still has an object to which one directs one's love. This unconditional love for all beings is usually expressed by great religious or political leaders who are able to extend their compassion to all beings regardless of nationality, ethnicity, race or faith. However, there are some religious leaders who only love those within their own

faith; this, then, is not compassion of the second level.

Compassion of the third level has no object to which it is directed. There is no purpose or goal that needs to be carried out, there is no idea of contribution that needs to be made, there is no specific person that needs to be loved and helped. One goes wherever and whenever there is a need. One does one's best, within one's ability, to help the person in need. When the need is fulfilled, then in one's mind, there is no trace. It is like a boat travelling through a body of water – there is no trace left after the wake of the boat; after a bird flies across the sky, there is no trail left behind by the bird. Therefore, the person

practicing this compassion has no notion of giver, or receiver, or of a compassionate deed in his or her mind. There is no trace left in this person's mind of this compassionate deed. Still, this compassion is eternal and infinite, going wherever there is a need to be fulfilled. Ordinary people cannot realize this compassion. It can only be manifested by the Buddha, the enlightened one, and by great bodhisattvas. The great Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara is also referred to as the Bodhisattva of Great Compassion.

We, the ordinary people, should all be able to practice the first compassion of contributing to those around us without expecting anything in return. But we should strive to practice the second compassion; our goal should be to love all beings of the entire world, regardless of their faith, ethnicity, culture or gender. If we do not make the second compassion our goal, then this world will always be in war, conflict, struggle and opposition. We will constantly be plagued by discrimination against women because we think they are inferior, against men because we think they are not good, against people of different ethnic groups because they are different.

But it is important to begin at the first level of loving those around us. If one only wants to practice the second compassion, that of the love for all the people of the world, but not the love of one's parents, for example, this would be absurd.

As an example, I have often observed husband and wife arguing over the injustices within their relationship. They are constantly calculating to see if the other spouse's love matches their own. But the reality is that it is difficult to achieve complete justice between

the two parties in a marital relationship. For instance, only women can become pregnant and give birth; only they go through the pain of pregnancy and labour. This is a reality. If the wife feels that this is not fair, the husband will then insist that he still has to take care of their offspring and that this is still a contribution. If the couple constantly engages in this comparison and evaluation to achieve complete justice between husband and wife, then there is no compassion. If there were compassion in the relationship, their attitudes would be unconditional love for each other without expecting anything in return. If the husband and wife view their love this way, then theirs will be a harmonious relationship. In fact, even if only one spouse has this compassionate attitude, the relationship would be harmonious. The same idea applies



to the community – if there is someone who is compassionate within the community, then there will be harmony. The same idea can also apply to a larger society. That is why I have always encouraged everyone to practice compassion.

I would like you to reflect on this question. Please ask yourself: Am I a compassionate person? Or am I a selfish person?



Dharma Drum Mountain hosted the Women Faith Leaders Compassion Retreat as an unconditional contribution. Dharma Drum Mountain does not expect anything in return. We were willing and happy to be able to offer this facility so you can gather here and share your experience in this retreat. If you return to your home town and use the experiences of this retreat to benefit yourself, benefit your community and benefit the world, then we will be happy, because our mission will have been accomplished. This is our approach in all the work we engage in at Dharma Drum Mountain. If in all our efforts, we thought-about what was in it for Dharma Drum Mountain, you would not see the Dharma Drum Mountain you see today. One thing for sure, by doing our work unconditionally, the more we contribute, the more people embrace our mission and are willing and happy to return and contribute themselves.

Therefore, I am hopeful about the world because compassion exists. When there is compassion in an organization, there is great hope in the organization. When there is compassion in a community, then there is great hope in the community. When there is compassion in the world, then there is great hope for the entire world. When this happens, the world will be heaven itself. In fact, everyone here taking part in this retreat is contributing, and the most important contributor in this retreat is the convenor of this retreat, Ms. Dena Merriam.

Thank you.

By The Most Venerable Master Sheng Yen  
Founder, Dharma Drum Mountain  
June 22, 2006



## Compassion and Justice Meeting Venerable Chao Hwei

By Rebecca Li

Recently, it was my privilege to participate in the Women Faith Leaders Retreat held at Dharma Drum Mountain, Taiwan, on June 20-22. The theme of the retreat was “Compassionate Mind, Compassionate World.” I was there primarily to translate for Shifu in his closing address, but prior to that I had the good fortune to participate in the discussion and meet some amazing women, one of whom was Venerable Chao Hwei.

Venerable Chao Hwei is professor of Religion and director of the Research Center of Applied Ethics at Hsuan Chuang University, a Buddhist university in Taiwan. She studied under

Venerable Master Yin Shun, author of *The Way to Buddhahood*, and is a prolific scholar and author. She writes for newspapers to share the Buddhist perspective on issues as wide-ranging as animal rights and the legalization of gambling in Taiwan. On the first day of the retreat, Venerable Chao Hwei brought up the issue of compassion and justice, arguing that there is no true compassion if we do not face the issue of justice. I was intrigued by her lucid and forceful argument; this was the first time I had seen a Chinese bhikshuni articulate her moral and intellectual position in such a forthright manner. I was fascinated also because we were discussing compassion, a topic that usually evokes an image of gentle, smiling people helping each other and getting along. This is hardly what comes to mind in debates over issues



of injustice, such as the unequal treatment of men and women.

In the open discussion and the subsequent conversations I had with her, Venerable Chao Hwei shared her experience advocating the abolition of the “eight deferential practices,” a set of additional precepts taken by fully ordained bhikshunis prescribing deferential manners to be used by bhikshunis (nuns) when interacting with bhikshus (monks). One such precept requires a bhikshuni, even though she is fully ordained with seniority, to bow deferentially to a novice monk. Within the monastic sangha of Dharma Drum Mountain, I was told, while these eight precepts are included in the full precepts taken by bhikshunis, Master Sheng Yen does not require that bhikshunis follow them in their interactions with bhikshus. However, in many instances, according to Venerable Chao Hwei, the existence of these eight precepts continues to damage the monastic sangha both by instilling a sense of pride, entitlement and superiority in some bhikshus, and a sense of inferiority, shame and a lack of confidence in some bhikshunis. These eight precepts perpetuate the inequality of men and women. In this system, everyone loses. Those in subordinate positions suffer from unfair treatment, while those in dominant positions give rise to pride and arrogance. Venerable Chao Hwei argued that allowing this injustice to continue is uncompassionate as we are not doing anything to help these beings alleviate their suffering.

Venerable Chao Hwei cautioned against glossing over injustice in the name of maintaining harmony and practicing compassion. She pointed out that in Buddhism, we give such premium to the need to harmonize with

everyone that we shy away from speaking out against injustice. Unfortunately, this silence in the face of unjust practices is often interpreted as endorsement of these practices, and we are therefore as guilty as those who defend such injustice. Complicity in injustice is certainly not in accordance with compassion, since we fail to take action to stop a system from inflicting suffering. In the name of maintaining a community’s harmony, we often fail to speak up against injustice because we do not want to cause open divisions within the community. But Venerable Chao Hwei argues that true compassion prompts us to speak out against injustice. Not only does the effort to end injustice help save the victims from suffering, it also helps the perpetrators, by stopping them from causing suffering, and thus from creating unwholesome karma.

Venerable Chao Hwei pointed out that the practice of compassion requires constant reflection and courage. One needs to reflect critically on why a certain practice is followed. Is it in accordance with wisdom and compassion, or is it merely in compliance with tradition passed down from a different era that may no longer be relevant? It takes courage, as critical examination challenges those in power and those benefiting from the status quo. Speaking out risks being accused of causing conflict within the Buddhist community, of being egotistical, of being uncompassionate, in other words, of being un-Buddhist. Venerable Chao Hwei contends that it is precisely out of great compassion that she challenges unjust practices, of which gender discrimination is one.

I suggested to Venerable Chao Hwei that tolerating injustice not only prolongs the suffering of the victims, it is also very damaging



to Buddhism's reputation in the West. Justice is a very important value in the West, and it is difficult for people in the West to accept a religious tradition that condones unjust practices. Venerable Chao Hwei urged everyone to keep in mind that the Buddha taught that the purpose of the precepts was to preserve the proper Dharma, not to be an end in themselves. Since the equality of sentient beings is at the heart of the Buddha's teachings, keeping silent about unjust practices is complicity, and is equivalent to slandering the Buddha's teachings. It is thus the responsibility of every Buddhist practitioner, monastic or lay, to speak out and act against injustice.

Some worry about a schism if some in the Buddhist community push for changes while others insist on preserving tradition. I think this is an excellent opportunity for the Buddhist community to put the Dharma

into practice collectively. It is easy to be calm and compassionate when everyone is in agreement. The challenge is to engage in a dialogue and to examine issues critically, stimulating each other's thinking, learning the other side's perspective without being dismissive, and working together to find satisfactory solutions without allowing our self-centered attachments to get in the way. This is not easy. But I believe that if we all put the Dharma into practice while engaging in this debate, applying the Buddha's wisdom and compassion, this dialogue will help the entire Buddhist community move forward into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The process will bring hope to the world as it will illustrate that it is possible to engage in a debate over difficult and controversial issues and to find satisfactory solutions by applying compassion and wisdom. Thus everyone, Buddhist and non-Buddhist, may benefit from this compassionate action.

# The Past

## News from the Chan Meditation Center and the DDMBA Worldwide

---

### Women in Buddhism

With the aim of focusing the power of female compassion and wisdom, DDM hosted a three-day forum and retreat for Women Leaders of Faith June 20-22 at the DDM World Center for Buddhist Education.

More than 20 honored guests from abroad, including Sister Joan Chittister, Co-Chair of the Global Peace Initiative of Women (GPIW) in the United States, Ms. Dena Merriam, Convenor of GPIW, Rev. Vrnda Chaitanya of India, Rev. Chi Kwang Sunim of Australia, Rev. Dhammananda Chatsumarn of Thailand, Rev. Amel Eldih of Sudan, Rev. Teny Pirri Simonian of Switzerland, and Dr. Rushud Zidan of Iraq, among others, were in attendance.

In her opening remarks, Guo Kuang Fashi said, “DDM is the Dharma center of Guanyin,” and expressed the hope that all participants would avail themselves of the opportunity to foster female power and wisdom for the purpose of “building a pure land here on this earth.”

Echoing Guo Kuang Fashi’s sentiments, Ms. Dena Merriam, one of the forum sponsors, said that “it would be a great loss if the wisdom and influence of Buddhist nuns were to weaken in the international community,”

noting that we have a great opportunity to cultivate compassion in the world today.

The first day of the forum focused on Challenges for Buddhist Women Monastics, The Relevance of Monastic Training Today, and The Role of Monastics in Society Today.

In a morning of lively discussion, participants pointed out the challenges female Buddhist monastics face today in terms of funding, resources, education, and gender discrimination.

Chao Hwei Fashi, a university professor of religion, asked, “Why is it that nuns have to be approved by monks for ordination, and not by other nuns instead?”

This brought an enthusiastic response. “Some young nuns believe they do not need monks, since they have their own support network; indeed, some feel they do not need a patriarchal system, while some elder nuns are ready to break away from the traditional order,” said Rev. Chi Kwang Sunim.

In the afternoon discussion, speakers addressed the theme of monastics in a state of transition in modern society, posing questions such as: What are the benefits and disadvantages of their current situation? What sort of

communication can be applied to share the values of monasticism with the non-monastic community of faith?

Sister Joan Chittister commented, "The assumption is that in some form or another monasticism has changed. How can we tell who is really a monastic? Did we throw the baby out with the bathwater?"

Answers may not be easy to come by, but the guests had a stimulating time together posing the questions.

### **Disaster Relief Updates Quest for Global Healing II**

More than 650 delegates from 15 countries attended the second international Quest for Global Healing conference in Bali on May 3-8, focusing on post-disaster relief to provide both spiritual and physical rehabilitation, with an emphasis on promoting international cooperation.

DDM played a significant role at the conference, with presentations by Guo Charn Fashi and Chang Ji Fashi highlighting DDM's work fostering "spiritual environmentalism," and presenting the teachings of Master Sheng Yen.

The Quest for Global Healing was founded by Marcia Jaffe to look for effective ways to encourage governments throughout the world to restore peace in the wake of such tragedies as 9/11 and the South Asian Tsunami disaster. In addition to physical healing, special attention is given to healing people's minds.

The conference was also honored by the presence of Mr. Desmond Mpilo Tutu and Ms.

Betty Williams, both winners of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984 and 1976, respectively, who came to share their experiences.

### **DDM's Medical Relief Team Heads for Sri Lanka Again**

On May 11th, Dharma Drum Mountain's volunteer medical relief team set off again for Sri Lanka to provide local residents with 11 days of medical treatment. The 31 medical professionals, led by Dr. Pan Wen-chung, included psychologists, and provided medication as well as psychotherapy to the victims of the 2004 tsunami.

Since the tsunami struck in December 2004, DDM has unveiled a continuing series of humanitarian initiatives, including two to three yearly medical visits to Sri Lanka.

DDM's medical relief team went to Hambantota and Matara in Sri Lanka, where people have been chronically subject to insufficient medical resources and poor hygiene. An estimated 2,500 people were expected to benefit from DDM medical services this time around.

Commenting on the tsunami tragedy in Southeast Asia, Master Sheng Yen noted that mental rehabilitation is a long-term process. Although material relief is imperative for tsunami victims, the mental trauma they have suffered requires that others from around the world pay greater attention. To this end, DDM has established a mental health station in Sri Lanka.

### **DDM Relief to Indonesian Quake Zones**

On the morning of May 13<sup>th</sup>, an earthquake measuring 6.2 on the Richter scale struck the

densely populated island of Java in Indonesia. The worst devastation was in the town of Bantul, where more than 3,000 people were killed, and 80 percent of the homes were flattened.

DDM's response was immediate. Work started right away on forming a team of volunteers to go to Indonesia. Fundraising workers flew into action. Within a very short time, Mrs. Wu Yi-ye, vice chairwoman of the DDM Dharma Upholding Society, provided immediate assistance to complete the work of relief procurements commissioned by Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). DDM donated an additional NT \$3.5 million in relief materials including food, water, tents and medical supplies, which were shipped to Indonesia from Taiwan via Hsinchu Air Force Base on May 30<sup>th</sup>.

## **Suicide & Social Distress**

In recent months, Master Sheng Yen has been called upon more than once to provide guidance in facing Taiwan's most pressing social problems. At the top of the list is the wave of suicides that has gravely affected society of late. Other interrelated ills include heavy debts from overspending on credit cards, tensions with a growing immigrant population, and in general, a setting of political strife and dwindling morality. In response, Master Sheng Yen has encouraged people to apply the Dharma as a means of solving problems in their daily lives, and urged them not to forsake life, for in it there is infinite hope.

On May 17<sup>th</sup>, Taiwan Premier Su Tseng-chang paid a personal visit to Master Sheng Yen to appeal for guidance in dealing with the problem of suicide, and asked him to bring his

influence to bear. Premier Su observed that even if one has a strong intention to commit suicide, a two-minute pause can be a life-saver, and expressed the hope that Master Sheng Yen's influence might reach desperate people during those two minutes of reflection.

Sheng Yen pointed out that religious teachings could provide spiritual assistance, cultivating religious and ethical awareness to help people face heightened feelings of melancholy and suicidal impulses, which have also affected Taiwan's growing immigrant population. He recalled a talk he gave at the United Nations in 2004 in which he called on people to seek a common ethics, and to love their neighbors, family and society.

Pursuit of such ethics, however, also requires government authorities to take corresponding measures. For example, the government of Taiwan could adopt a more positive and friendly approach in its dealings with the wives of immigrants. Premier Su heartily concurred, saying that the government would henceforth take measures to show greater kindness to immigrants and their relatives.

Previously, in an April television broadcast, Sheng Yen had spoken out on suicide and some of the commonly related problems. "Committing suicide is an irresponsible act against oneself and society," he said. "There is always hope as long as one is alive ... as long as one can breathe, there is immense wealth."

When asked about the plague of credit card overspending that led to heavy debts, which in turn generated various social problems such as family suicide and violent crime, he reminded us that we must be aware of

our own financial limits and avoid excessive material desires, noting that our desires are endless, but our needs are few.

He further explained that although people believe that such situations of dire extremity are strictly an individual matter, from a Buddhist perspective, they are a result of common karma. The individual, the financial institutions and the government are all responsible for their short-sightedness in pursuit of immediate gain. He encouraged people who are overwhelmed with credit card debt to confront their problems bravely and responsibly, with the method, "Face it, accept it, deal with it and let it go."

On the more general matter of malaise in Taiwan and declining confidence in its future in view of ceaseless political wrangling, the Master said that every one of us is also partly responsible for this situation since the politicians were elected by us. Despite such stresses in society, Sheng Yen called on people to stay calm. "With a calm mind there will be peace. When a person is at peace with himself, there will be peace in the family and society."

## Vesak Worldwide

May was a month of widespread Vesak celebrations as Buddhists from many traditions gathered to celebrate the Buddha's birthday.

### Taiwan

In Taipei every May weekend saw celebrations and ceremonies at DDM, sutra chanting, theatre and story-telling for children. Drawing upon DDM's growing commitment to "Spiritual Environmentalism," educational activities for pilgrims and families stressed themes of reverence for nature and Kuan Yin.

Ushering in the month, DDM hosted a "Bathing the Buddha Festival" at the Chung-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Culture on April 30<sup>th</sup> in Taipei.

As scores chanted scriptures inside the building, the park in front of the institute was filled with a host of children's activities under the banyan trees such as solving puzzles, walking without spilling a bowl of water, and clay modeling. Alongside the children's amusements, free medical services for the elderly



were provided, including exams for diabetes and osteoporosis, tests for diabetes and high blood pressure, and even haircuts.

Festivities for the day wrapped up in mid-afternoon with performances by the Beitou Elementary school orchestra and percussion ensemble.

Earlier, as people waited in long lines to ladle water onto a small Buddha statue in a basin, a 10 year-old boy from Beitou declared he was having a great time. "If they're offering the same games next year, I'll be here," he said.

### **Australia**

With the world famous Sydney Opera House and Harbour Bridge serving as backdrop, the Sydney DDM participated in Vesak Celebrations at the First Fleet Park on May 20.

The event brought together Buddhist organizations from the Chinese, Tibetan and Theravada traditions to celebrate, while serving to introduce Buddhism to a broader public. All were welcome to bathe the Buddha, and a contingent of youth from DDM presented an offering of flowers. No less than fourteen information booths and seven vegetarian food stalls attended to the needs of the crowd. From start to finish the day was filled with Dharma talks, Buddhist songs, dance and chanting of mantras, ending with a Candle and Lantern Parade for Peace.

DDM volunteers took turns distributing books on Chan and the teachings of Master Sheng Yen, or assisted members of the public as they tried to answer a "Buddhist Quiz," rewarding correct answers with colorful lanterns and

origami cranes. Overall, public interest was keen and participation heartening.

### **First World Buddhist Forum**

On April 13th in Hangzhou, China, the First World Buddhist Forum was convened. "A harmonious world begins in the mind" was the theme of the conference. More than 1,000 Buddhist dignitaries and scholars from 34 countries and regions attended the four-day gathering.

Representing DDM were Guo Pin Fashi and Guo Shiang Fashi, along with Prof. Lee Chih-fu, Director of the Chung Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies. On behalf of Master Sheng Yen, Guo Pin Fashi read an article on the "Heart Dharma" at the opening session citing the need for respect, compassion and tolerance among different peoples.

Participants agreed that the Forum was a powerful step in the direction of unifying Chinese Buddhism and bridging distances among the world's Buddhist communities.

### **New Resident Teacher at Dharma Drum Retreat Center**

In April 2006, Guo Jun Fashi, who received Dharma transmission from Master Sheng Yen in November 2005, officially became the Resident Teacher of DDRC. In the past few years, Guo Jun Fashi has served as an assistant teacher to Master Sheng Yen in intensive Chan retreats. He brings with him the trust of Master Sheng Yen, an in-depth understanding of Dharma based on many years of study, a deep experience in Chan practice, and last but not least, a dose of youthful energy. We at



## Retreats at DDRC

DDRC are confident that under the guidance of Guo Jun Fashi, Master Sheng Yen's vision of a vibrant community where people come from all over the world to fulfill the call of wisdom and compassion through Chan practice will be realized. As DDRC turns a new page in its history, we ask for your continuing support to help fulfill this vision of which we all partake.

Guo Jun Fashi has initiated a pilot residential program that will start in August. This program is designed for those wishing to dedicate substantial periods of time (1, 2, or 3 months) to the practice of Chan. Residents follow a set schedule of activities that includes morning and evening services, sitting and walking meditations, mindful work, personal study, as well as calligraphy and tea meditations. Detailed information about the program is available at <http://www.dharmadrumretreat.org/index.php?id=events#ja2006>

We also want to inform you that in order for the intensive retreats to really serve their purpose, participants in these retreats are now required to either have participated in an intensive retreat at DDRC before, or have been to a seven-day introduction to intensive retreat practice at DDRC. This is to ensure that participants come into the retreats ready to delve into the methods of practice right from the beginning. The new seven-day program is designed to introduce the practice of mindfulness and the methods of Silent Illumination and Huatou, all in one retreat. Many people, including long-time practitioners, have found such a retreat helpful.

It has been a tradition at DDRC since its inception that four intensive Chan retreats are held each year. Two of these occur in late May and late June, each lasting 10 days. Guo Jun Fashi, who received Dharma transmission from Master Sheng Yen in November 2005 and formally became the resident teacher at DDRC in April 2006, served as the head teacher of both retreats. While attendance in these two retreats was not as high as when Master Sheng Yen was teaching, participants have been impressed by Guo Jun Fashi's depth and skill. Many people have expressed their confidence that Guo Jun Fashi will continue the legacy of Master Sheng Yen. One long-time participant completed the Huatou Retreat in early June and immediately signed up to attend the Silent Illumination Retreat held only three weeks later.

The Silent Illumination Retreat in late June also saw the use of a new retreat application system at DDRC. For those who do not yet know, we have gone fully online! Retreatants can now easily sign up for an event through our online application system. The system has been very helpful in helping us administer the events, especially retreats with many participants. This system also solved a problem related to email notification that has caused much inconvenience for some retreatants in the past. Email notifications sent to retreatants were sometimes not delivered or delivered into the junk mail box. The online application system takes care of this problem since applicants can now log on to check their application status online. And last but not least, we are saving trees by reducing paperwork!

# The Future

*Retreats, classes and other upcoming events.*

**Contact:**

Phone: (845) 744-8114

E-mail: [ddrc@dharmadrumretreat.org](mailto:ddrc@dharmadrumretreat.org)

Website: [www.dharmadrumretreat.org](http://www.dharmadrumretreat.org)

## 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 Introductory Chan Retreat: Mindfulness Practice (DDRC)**

Oct. 6 – 8

### **Four-day Introductory Chan Retreat: Mindfulness Practice (DDRC)**

Oct. 12 – 15

### **Seven-day Introduction to Intensive Chan Retreat: Mindfulness, Silent Illumination and Huatou Practice (DDRC)**

Oct. 17 – 23

### **Ten-day Huatou Retreat (DDRC)**

Saturday, November 24, 5 pm –

Sunday, December 3, 10 am

### **Ten-day Silent Illumination Retreat (DDRC)**

Friday, December 26, 5 pm –

Monday, January 4, 2007, 10 am

## 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

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 (the second Sunday of the month devoted to the chanting of the Great Compassion Dharani Sutra,

2 – 4.

## Classes at CMC

### Taijiquan Classes

Thursdays, 7:30 – 9:00 pm, ongoing with instructor David Ngo, \$80 for a session of 16 classes, or \$25/month. (First Thursday of the month free for newcomers.)

### Yoga

Saturdays, 3 – 4:30 pm, with instructor Rikki Asher. \$10/class, or \$80 for 10 classes.

### Beginners Meditation Classes and Beginners Dharma Classes

Call or e-mail CMC for schedule:

Phone: (718) 592-6593

E-mail: [ddmbaus@yahoo.com](mailto:ddmbaus@yahoo.com)

## Special Events

### Transmission of the Bodhisattva Precepts at the Dharma Drum Retreat Center

Transmitted by Chan Master Sheng Yen  
Thursday – Sunday, November 16 – 19  
Please call (718) 592-6593.

### "Zen an Inner Peace"

Chan Master Sheng Yen's weekly television  
program on WNYE 25, Sunday, 7 am.



# 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:*

Contact: Gilbert Gutierrez  
Tel: 951-897-2286

##### *San Francisco*

Contact: H. C. Chang  
102 South Camino Real  
Millbrae, CA 94030  
Tel: 650-692-3259  
Fax: 650-692-2256  
Email: ddmbasf@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)253-7248  
Email: wreturns@optonline.net

## New York

### *Manhattan:*

The Meditation Group  
Marymount Manhattan College  
231 E. 71st (2nd and 3rd Avenues)  
Contact: Bruce Rickenbacker  
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  
755 Savannah Trail  
Medina, Ohio 44256  
Tel: 330-241-5321  
Email: DDMBA\_Ohio@yahoo.com

## Oregon

Contact: Sabrina Huang  
12715 SW 158<sup>th</sup> 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 13<sup>th</sup> 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](http://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  
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 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](mailto:secretary@westernchanfellowship.org),

[www.westernchanfellowship.org](http://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  
<http://www.media.com.my/zen>

## 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](mailto: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](mailto:webmaster@ddm.org.tw)  
<http://www.ddm.org.tw>

*Dharma Drum International  
Meditation Group:*

Contact: Guo Yuan Fa Shi  
Tel: 886-02-2778-5007~9  
Fax: 886-02-2778-0807  
Email: [gchiis@ddm.org.tw](mailto:gchiis@ddm.org.tw)  
Saturday, 8:30-11:30 am, meditation and  
discussion in English at An Her Branch  
Monastery

## Australia:

### Melbourne

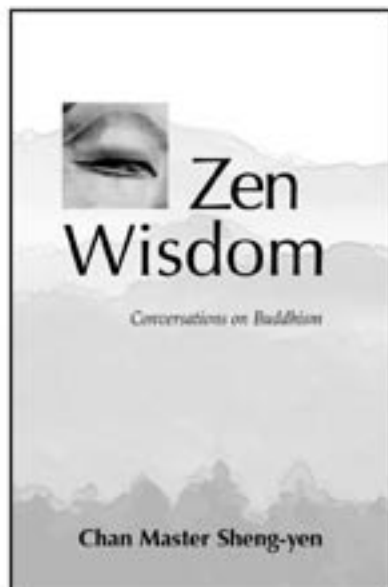
DDMBA Australia-Victoria Branch  
115 Serpells Road, Templestowe VIC 3106  
Australia  
Tel: (61-3) 2185-0290; (61-3) 9846-8801

### Sydney

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

## New Zealand:

No. 9 Scorpio PL. Mairangi Bay,  
Auckland,  
New Zealand  
Tel: 64-9-4788430

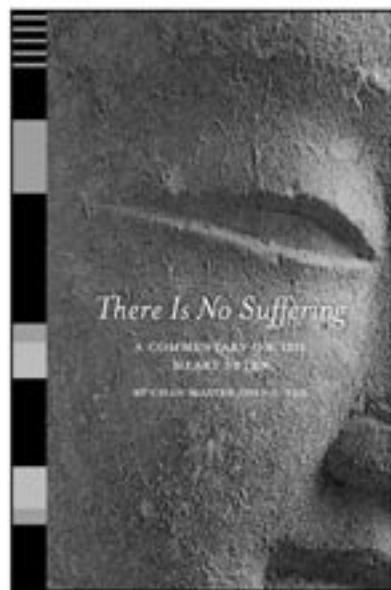


## Zen Wisdom

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.

## There Is No Suffering

*There Is No Suffering* is Chan Master Sheng-yen's commentary on the *Heart Sutra*. He speaks on the sutra from the Chan point of view, and presents it as a series of contemplation methods, encouraging readers to experience it directly through meditation and daily life. In this way, reading the *Heart Sutra* becomes more than just an intellectual exercise; it becomes a method of practice by which one can awaken to the fundamental wisdom inherent within each of us.

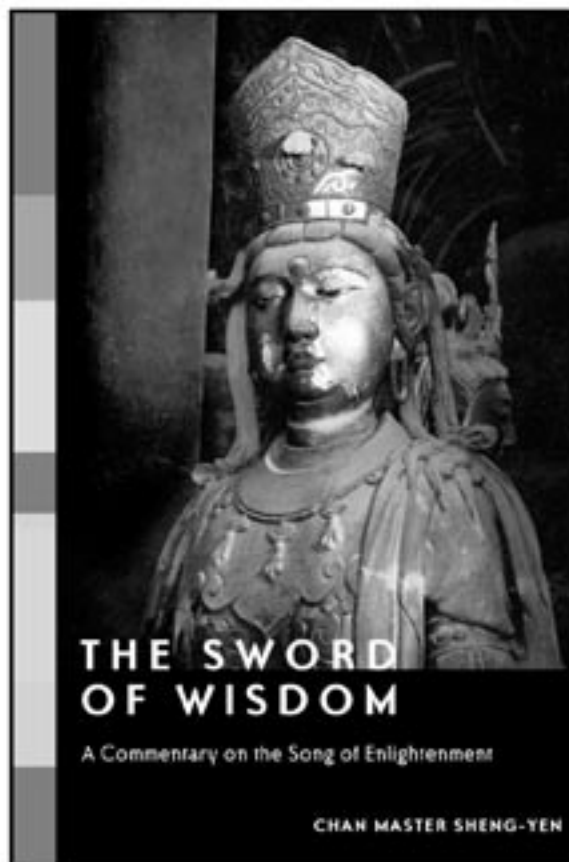


Published by Dharma Drum Publications and North Atlantic Books



Available wherever books are sold

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



### *The Sword of Wisdom*

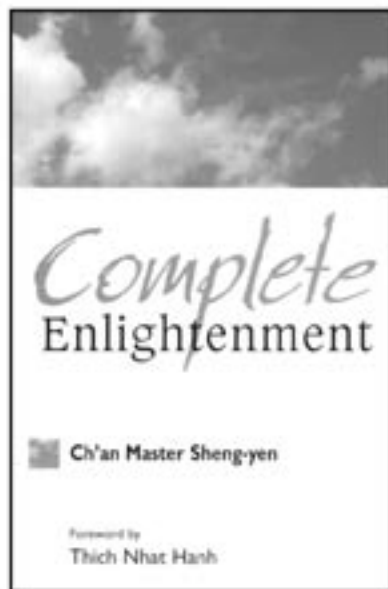
*The Sword of Wisdom* is a penetrating commentary on the Song of Enlightenment, a famous Chan text that speaks of proper methods and attitudes for practice. In this book, compiled from a series of lectures delivered during intensive meditation retreats, Master Sheng-yen gives valuable advice and guidance 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.

Published by Dharma Drum Publications and North Atlantic Books



Available wherever books are sold





## Complete Enlightenment

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.

Published by Dharma Drum Publications

## Hoofprint of the Ox

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.



Published by Oxford University Press

Available wherever books are sold

Introducing the newest book from Chan Master Sheng Yen

# Illuminating Silence

*With introduction and commentaries by John Crook*



This comprehensive work provides an unusual introduction to the practice of Chan by Master Sheng Yen based on talks given during two intensive retreats at the meditation centre of the Western Chan Fellowship in Wales. It provides a basic handbook for all concerned with an effective training in Zen for the West with especial reference to the little known practice of Silent Illumination. In his foreword Stephen Batchelor writes : " The discourses are lucid and direct, drawn widely on the sources of Chinese Buddhism, and speak in a refreshingly modern idiom. Perhaps because the setting was relatively small and intimate, the gentleness, warmth and humour of Master Sheng Yen radiate throughout the text."

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

Phone: 0207 836 2182, or wherever books are sold. Price : £ 9.99. US\$ 14.95.