

Chan 禪 Magazine

Winter 2008



Chan Meditation Center

Institute of Chung-Hwa Buddhist Culture

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“Prior to partaking in our vegetarian meals,
we recite an offering:

We make offerings to the Buddha,
We make offerings to the Dharma,
We make offerings to the Sangha,
We make offerings to all sentient beings.

First we make offerings to the Three Jewels, because we are grateful to them for giving us the means to practice the Way. We then make offerings to all sentient beings for their contributions to our welfare. Mealtime offerings help us to develop the mind of gratitude...In this situation, I too feel gratitude and try to repay it, and I offer it to all of you...I thank you for giving me the opportunity to make this offering.”

– Chan Master Sheng Yen,
from *Attaining the Way:
A Guide to the Practice of
Chan Buddhism*.

Chan Magazine

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Chan 禪 Magazine

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Cover photo by Jerry Roach

From The Editor

What a complicated world we live in; what a convoluted thing it is to be an American Buddhist, to be practicing an ancient and Eastern discipline in a modern and Western context.

The news is full of Thanksgiving-related stories just now – last week The New York Times Dining section featured an homage to Frank Reese, the greatest living American poultry farmer, who is personally responsible for having saved five heritage breeds of turkey from extinction. How? Essentially, by killing them.

The story is this: In the fifties a hybrid turkey hit the market called the Broad-breasted White, a bird so overbred for breast meat that it could no longer fly, nor reproduce on its own, nor do anything else that normal birds do. What it was good for was being raised quickly on factory farms – essentially turkey prisons – and marketed to American consumers enthralled by better living through science. Before long, the broadbreasted, but otherwise unhealthy and tasteless birds had driven their competition off the market, Thanksgiving dinner had become the meal we love to hate, and the turkey population had become a sitting duck, a mono-crop with so little genetic diversity that only toxic doses of antibiotics keep it alive.

And in response was born the movement to rescue heritage breeds by eating them. An organization called Slow Food, which works in defense of sustainable agriculture, biodiversity and vanishing food traditions, and of which (disclosure) I am an officer, initiated its Heritage Turkey Project in 2000, and this year

Mr. Reese and a few colleagues are delivering over 10,000 heritage birds to Thanksgiving tables.

I can understand why vegetarians might have a problem with this. Don't eat it, and it would still be alive, right? Wrong, unfortunately. And the Thanksgiving turkey is only the tip of a very big iceberg. All over the planet, in the realms of both animal and vegetable, biodiversity is being driven off the market and into extinction by cheap, mass-produced, chemically dependent mono-crops. China has lost 90 percent of the rice varieties it had in 1949; Mexico has lost 80 percent of its corn species; Europe has forsaken 80 percent of its overall agricultural diversity; the US 93 percent. If we don't eat it, we lose it.

But all sentient beings fear death, and avoid suffering. And that perception is at the center of Buddhist ethics, isn't it? But the perception is not exactly right. Actually, most species will risk death, even embrace death, for one thing – their children. So if we base our ethics on what other sentient beings want we must take account of the fact that what they want most is not personal survival, but the survival of their species. And in the case of livestock, we only keep the species alive by eating them.

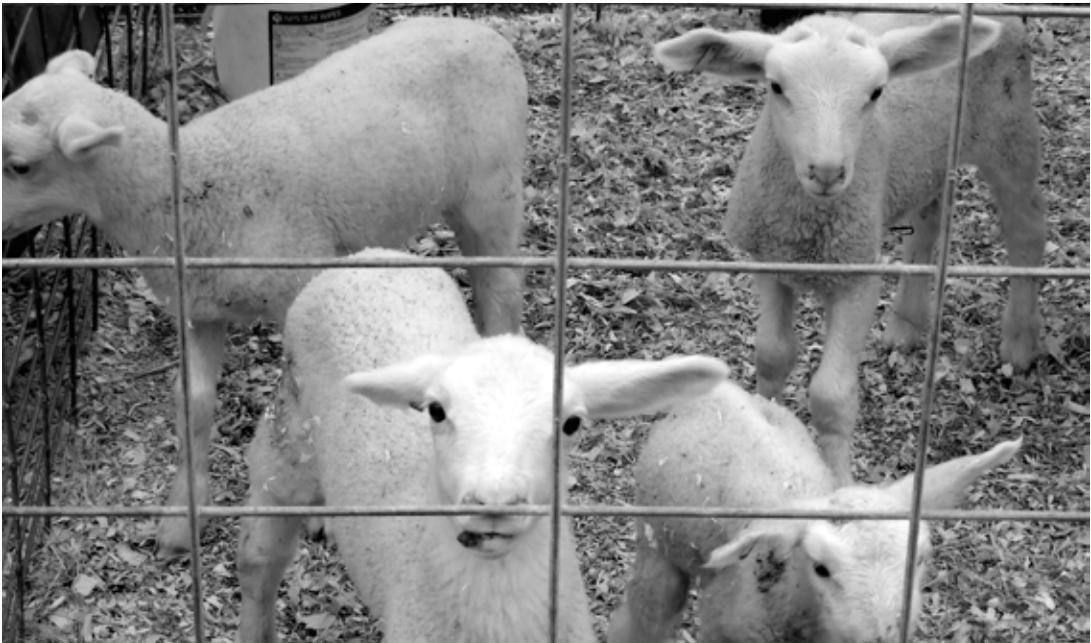
And that's not the only horrifying irony awaiting the vegetarian who wants to know something about the food chain. Vegetarians flock to the wonderful sheep's milk products made by my friend Karen Weinberg at her Three-Corner Field Farm, and are then shocked and

dismayed that she sells the lamb chops as well. Most of them have never considered, as they enjoy the silky, rich yogurt and guilt-free feta, that milk only comes from mothers, that the by-product of all dairy foods is baby animals, and that something has to be done with them. At big commercial dairies, those babies are thrown away. On Karen's farm, they live good lives on rich pasture...until their time comes.

In 2000, while Slow Food was starting the Turkey Project, Master Sheng Yen was addressing the environmental working group at the UN Millennium Peace Project, saying in part, "Unfortunately, the immoderate development and the excessive use of chemicals in the world have led to the rapid consumption of natural resources, the speedy deterioration of the natural environment, and the extinc-

tion of a variety of species...The remaining tracts of tropical rain forest become smaller and smaller; the number of species likewise decreases, and desertification of the land expands at a faster rate. If this situation is not placed in check and reversed, then humankind will have become extinct even before the earth is destroyed."

Shifu was not thinking about a turkey sandwich when he made that speech, but sustainable development includes the thousands of breeds of livestock being endangered by the economics of the feedlot, as well as the disappearing heirloom grains being crowded out by the proliferation of genetically modified corn and rice, and if the Buddhist program is the cultivation of compassion for all beings, that must include the shepherd as well as the little lost lamb.



ORTHODOX CHINESE BUDDHISM

**A CONTEMPORARY CHAN MASTER'S
ANSWERS TO COMMON QUESTIONS**

by

Chan Master Sheng Yen

The following is excerpted from Orthodox Chinese Buddhism by Chan Master Sheng Yen, published this year by Dharma Drum Publications and North Atlantic Books, translated by Dr. Otto Chang and Douglas Gildow and edited by Mr. Gildow. Originally written by Master Sheng Yen while on solitary retreat in Taiwan in the early sixties, it was first published as Zhenxin de fojiao in Taiwan in 1965. The book primarily targeted what was then a relatively small audience of Taiwanese intellectuals, with the intention of clarifying what Master Sheng Yen describes as “the vague, confusing semblance of Buddhism which prevailed in Taiwanese society at that time and which had long been prevalent among Chinese commoners.” Over the next ten years, however, it gained tremendously in popularity; there are now over three million copies in print. The new English translation reflects some revisions the Master has made in consideration of the book’s new audience, however, as he tells us, “The fundamentals of the Buddha’s Dharma will never change.”

What Are Orthodox Buddhist Beliefs and Practices?

In Buddhism itself, there is no distinction between orthodox and superstitious, since the fundamental teachings are the same everywhere. Buddhism flows out from the sea of wisdom and compassion that was engendered by Shakyamuni, the enlightened Buddha. Its teachings are full of wisdom, kindness, radiance, comfort, freshness, and coolness. Buddhism as a religion is alive in the communi-

ties that have been established based on the Buddha’s teachings.

The term *orthodox Buddhism* implies correct faith, proper vows, right understanding, upright behavior, and genuine trust. Such authentic faith should be placed in teachings that are (1) timeless, (2) universal, and (3) necessary. In other words, the teachings should have always been true in the past, should be true everywhere in the present, and should infallibly be true in the future.

Faith or reliance on a principle or a thing that fails to meet these three criteria is not correct faith and is therefore superstition. If a religion's doctrines cannot stand the test of time, are incompatible with the environment, or cannot further develop in the face of change, the religion is superstitious.

It cannot be denied that in regions where Mahayana [lit. "Great Vehicle"] Buddhism is practiced, especially in China, authentic Buddhism has largely been the privilege of isolated, eminent monks and small numbers of gentry-scholars. Buddhism has seldom been correctly understood and practiced by the general populace, whose religious practice is actually a potpourri of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. For instance, practices such as worshipping gods and ghosts, and beliefs that people automatically become ghosts after death, are not Buddhist teachings.

Is the Buddha the Creator?

No. Orthodox Buddhism does not have the idea of a world-creator. The Buddha is an enlightened one among humans, and although he is capable of knowing all the truths in the world, he cannot change what has already occurred. And although the Buddha can help all sentient beings reach liberation, only those who make efforts can succeed. He is the best doctor to diagnose sentient beings' suffering; anybody who takes his prescriptions will be delivered. But he cannot help those who are unwilling to take his medicine. He is the best guide: anyone who follows his guidelines will be liberated from the world's sea of suffering. But he cannot help those who do not take his advice. The Buddha never thought of himself as a creator, and he never wanted his believers merely to worship him in rituals. Anyone who lives his teachings has truly seen him



Photo: John Feng

and is paying him the highest respect. Otherwise, one has not truly seen the Buddha, even if he or she personally greeted him in ancient India. So we see that the Buddha is not the Creator, nor is he an omnipotent, sovereign God.

Rather, the Buddha is only an instructor who teaches people the methods to relieve themselves of suffering and gain happiness. The Buddha himself has done this, but he cannot do it for us. He is a great educator, the teacher of gods and humans, not a magician or an illusionist. He didn't claim that he could "redeem people's sins," and he insisted that we are responsible for our own conduct and the consequences it brings, just like the old Chinese proverb says: "If you plant squash, you will harvest squash; if you plant beans, you will harvest beans."

What Does the Word Buddha Mean?

The word buddha comes from Sanskrit, an ancient Indian language. It means enlightenment or awakening: awakening not just oneself but also others; awakening to the knowledge and truth of all things at all times. Thus, a Buddha is sometimes called an omniscient human being or a "fully enlightened one."

The historical Buddha was born to this world as Prince Siddhartha Gautama of Kapilavastu more than 2500 years ago in 623 BCE. After he became enlightened, he was referred to by the epithet Shakyamuni. Shakra was his clan's name, and muni was a respectful term for a sage in ancient India. Shakyamuni was the founder of Buddhism.

Shakyamuni is the only Buddha in historical records. But in his teachings, we see that there were other Buddhas long ago in the ancient past, that there will be Buddhas in the future, and that even now there are Buddhas in other worlds. So Buddhists do not proclaim Shakyamuni Buddha to be the one and only Buddha; rather, they recognize the existence of infinite Buddhas in the past, present, and future. They even believe that all sentient beings (which include humans and animals), regardless of whether they believe in Buddhism or not, have the potential to become Buddhas. Buddhist teachings proclaim that "a Buddha is an enlightened sentient being, and a sentient being is a Buddha who has not yet become enlightened." An ordinary person and a noble one differ in their level of spiritual development, but both are equal in possessing buddha-nature, the potential to become a Buddha. Therefore, Buddhists do not worship the Buddha as the one and only God, nor do they believe in the existence of any creator-god. So [in this sense], a Buddhist is an atheist.

Where Did the Universe and Life Come From?

While Buddhists do not believe in the existence of a creator-god, the existence of the universe cannot be doubted, nor can the existence of life be denied. According to Buddhism, the most basic elements that comprise the universe are empty of self-nature, and the elements that comprise life are also devoid of self-nature. This lack of a separate self-nature, called emptiness, is the only unchanging truth in the universe. That it is an unchanging truth implies that emptiness has

no beginning and no ending: emptiness is the true state in which the universe and life have always existed.

Buddhists believe that all phenomena, including change in the universe and the cycle of birth and death, are consequences of the karma [intentional actions] of sentient beings. Karmic energy refers to the causal force produced by sentient beings' behavior, good or bad, which continually permeates or "colors" the field of consciousness (shittian)—the primary element of life. Karmic energy waits in the field of consciousness for the right external conditions to induce it to sprout and grow. This process is similar to planting seeds in the soil: the seeds wait for the inducement of sun, air, and water to sprout and grow. In Buddhism, this process is called the activation of karmic energy. Performing karmic action is the cause for activation of karmic energy, whereas the activation of karmic energy is the fruit of karma. The adage, "There are always consequences to doing good or evil," describes this principle.

Karma can be done individually, or collectively enacted by a group of people. Some karma, though individually performed, may be the same as other people's karma. And some, though collectively performed, may vary in degree among the group members. Thus,

"THE BUDDHA INSISTED THAT WE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR OWN CONDUCT AND THE CONSEQUENCES IT BRINGS, JUST LIKE THE OLD CHINESE PROVERB SAYS: 'IF YOU PLANT SQUASH, YOU WILL HARVEST SQUASH; IF YOU PLANT BEANS, YOU WILL HARVEST BEANS'"

karma can be understood in two general categories: collective, or shared, karma and individual, or non-shared, karma.

Due to collective karma, beings receive the same karmic recompense. For example, the earth is engendered by the karmic energies of the countless past, present, and future beings of our world. Infinite worlds exist throughout the universe, each formed according to the distinct collective karma of different groups of beings. So if it turns out that there really are human beings on Mars, a Martian would not necessarily take the same physical form as a human living on Earth. Even the stars and planets without life are the karmic consequences of sentient beings, as these celestial bodies serve as the backdrop to the stage in which sentient beings live. In short, each and every thing in the universe exists for some reason.

For example, the Sun could not possibly support life. But without the Sun, life on Earth could not survive. Although there are a lot of things whose reason for existing cannot be proved scientifically, Buddhists believe they are engendered by sentient beings' karmic energy, which is the reason they exist.

As for the first appearance of life on Earth, Buddhists believe that all living beings, from single-celled organisms to human beings, first emerged on this planet through spontaneous birth.

After the earth was formed, beings from the sixth heaven in the realm of form, the Heaven of Light-Sound, flew down to Earth and became the first human beings. But on Earth they fell into bad habits, craving for and becoming attached to a certain natural food. This food made them so heavy that they could no longer fly, so they settled here. Actually, this was just the consequence of their karma: after they had exhausted their karmic rewards of staying in the heavens, they had to descend to Earth to receive retribution for previous actions. Similarly, since Earth was engendered by collective karma of sentient beings, it is inevitable for these beings to experience the karmic result of life on Earth. After the karmic energies that lead one to live on Earth dissipate, other, new, karma may cause us to live on other worlds.

Because of non-shared karma, sentient beings on the same Earth take forms of differing status, from insects to humans. Among humans, some are born poor, others rich; some are intelligent, others foolish—they differ in countless ways.

In fact, from a broad perspective, shared karma can itself be a kind of non-shared karma. For example, the karma shared by all the sentient beings on Earth is not shared by sentient beings from other worlds. Similarly, non-shared karma can itself be shared karma. For instance, to be born as a black African or a yellow Asian is the result of different karma; yet both share the karma to be humans on Earth. By reasoning through analogy, we can see that people within one country differ in countless ways, and even siblings have different personalities, achievements, and feelings toward life experiences.

This entry describes how Buddhism views the existence and the origin of our universe and life.

What Is the Fundamental Doctrine of Buddhism?

That there is a vast number of Buddhist scriptures is well known. So no-one can say definitively which sutra or sutras are representative of Buddhism. Largely for this reason many schools of Buddhism emerged in China, each based on the perspective of particular sutras or treatises.

Nonetheless, there is a fundamental doctrine common to all Buddhism—what the Buddha discovered about life and the universe—the truth of conditioned arising, also known as dependent origination.

Simply put, conditioned arising means that things originate from causes and conditions, or alternatively, combinations of different factors produce all phenomena. For instance, for an article to be written, reach the hands of a reader, and help the reader understand something about Buddhism, the sequence of causal relations (causes and conditions) may appear simple but is actually exceedingly complex. First, a writing system must be developed and the author must master it. The author must absorb and accumulate knowledge. Then the author must have good health, enthusiasm, and understanding. Other necessary factors include the manufacture and use of stationery; proofing, typesetting, and printing; and handling and delivery of the mail. Finally, to satisfy the author's purpose in writing the article, the readers need to be interested, intel-

ligent, and motivated to read. This example of conditioned arising is only the simplest and the most obvious. If we investigate further, we will see that any single relationship is necessarily connected to innumerable other relationships. Such interdependency among relationships is what is meant by “causes and conditions.” Things arise when causes and conditions come together, and things pass away when causes and conditions disperse. This is the doctrine of dependent origination and extinction.

Because everything in the universe arises and passes away according to conditions, everything is impermanent and constantly changing; hence, Buddhists consider all phenomena provisional, temporary, and illusory. From a tiny bubble to the whole Earth, or even the stars, nothing is everlasting. If nothing is permanent and substantial, this proves that everything is empty. This is what is meant when it’s said in Buddhism that all phenomena are “dependently originated and [therefore] empty of [inherent] nature” (yuansheng xingkong).

Because of this doctrine, Buddhism is often known as the “way of emptiness.” But many people gravely misunderstand the true meaning of emptiness. Emptiness means that nothing is fixed or unchanging. It means non-substantiality rather than non-existence. Many people misinterpret emptiness to signify that nothing exists. Buddhists use the concept of conditioned arising to analyze things and to demonstrate things’ lack of substance. For instance a car, if analyzed from the perspective of a chemist, is no longer a car but a compound of various elements and the bonds among them. Viewed from its outside appear-

ance, a car is still a car, unless it has been damaged to the point that it is ready to be re-cast in a smelting furnace.

Buddhists say that everything arises from conditions and hence is empty of self-nature in order to analyze and shed light on the essential nature of things. It reminds us that we are living in a world of non-substantiality and illusion, and therefore had better not become captive to transitory fame, wealth, or desire for objects. To realize this is to see through the illusory nature of phenomena or to drop the endless greed for fame, wealth, and objects. The existence of phenomena is never denied. Although Buddhists say that phenomena are devoid of substance, they recognize that their lives do not exist apart from illusory phenomena, because those not liberated from birth and death still produce karma and receive karmic results. Karmic force is also illusory, yet it can propel beings to higher or lower states to experience happiness or suffering.

At this point, please be reminded that the illusory manifestation and existence of all phenomena stem from the karmic forces engendered by sentient beings. So if one thoroughly realizes the conditioned and empty nature of phenomena, one will not be lured and burdened by illusory phenomena, becoming their slave. One will be at ease and free from afflictions and delusions. This is the fulfillment of the practice of liberation from the cycle of birth and death. Anyone who is no longer pushed around by external phenomena can stop producing karma, which binds us to the cycle of birth and death. He can leave behind birth and death, or he can choose to control his own birth and death.

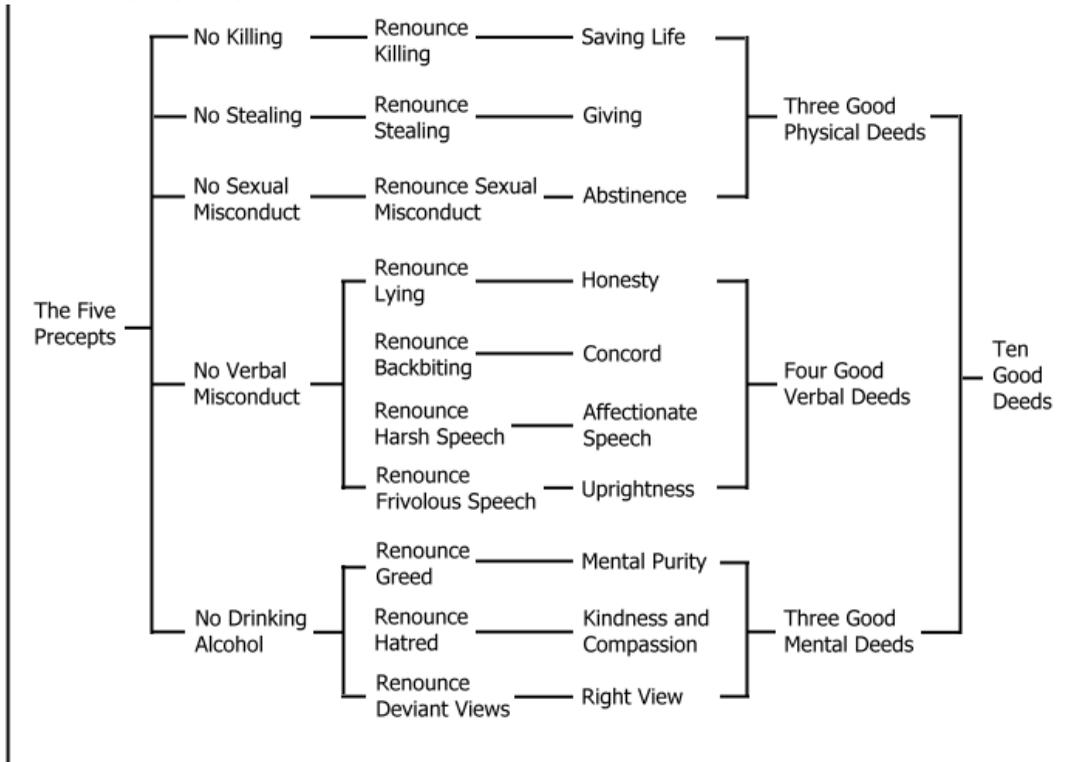
What Are the Basic Dogmas of Buddhism?

In principle, Buddhism has no dogmas. What are closest to being dogmatic are the precepts. But precepts for Buddhists are not a covenant with God, so they are not mysterious as in some religions. Precepts in Buddhism come from principles of ethics and are hence purely rational.

The basic rules of conduct for Buddhists are the five precepts and the ten good deeds or virtues, although the specific precepts someone takes vary according to what class of practitioner he or she is. For laypeople, there are the five precepts, the ten good deeds, and the eight precepts; for monks, there

are the ten precepts, the bhiksu precepts, and the bhiksuni precepts; in the Mahayana tradition, there are the bodhisattva precepts. All these precepts, however, are based on the five precepts and ten good deeds. In other words, other precepts are extensions and detailed sub-branches of the five precepts and ten good deeds. Therefore, if one can keep the five precepts and carry out the ten good deeds, the rest will not be so difficult to follow.

The five precepts are abstention from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct (unchastity), verbal misconduct, and drinking alcohol. The ten good deeds are extensions and expansion of the five precepts, and require one to perform good deeds as well as abstain from misdeeds, as shown in figure 1.



In summary, the Buddhist precepts are to commit no evil and to perform all good. Any act harmful to one's physical or mental health, family, society, country, to humanity, or to any sentient being falls under the scope of five precepts, and therefore should not be committed. Anything truly beneficial to one's own or to another's welfare should be carried out with all effort. To commit evil violates the precepts, and not to perform good deeds violates the precepts, too.

However, Buddhism is broad-minded. If someone is unaware that certain behavior violates the precepts, such behavior does not count as an infraction. Also, if someone has no intention to violate the precepts, even if she breaks them she is not guilty [that is, does not generate the negative karma] of the transgression. On the other hand, if someone harbors the intention to break the precepts, even if she ends up not breaking them, she bears some guilt [produces negative karmic energy]. For instance, if a woman is raped, she is still considered pure and not guilty of violating the precepts as long as she does not feel lustful pleasure during the rape, even though physically she was involved in an improper act. One is guilty of fully transgressing the precepts only when one actually, intentionally, and successfully carries out the violation.

What Are the Truths of Buddhism?

In the "Tattvartha" chapter of the Yogacārabhūmi Treatise, truth is called "reality" (S. tattva; C. zhenshi). Four broad categories of reality are discussed:

1. Reality according to worldly consent refers to reality as understood by ordinary beings

who understand things based on categorizing and on common sense arising from habit. This reality is further divided into two groups: (a) reality as understood by unenlightened, non-human species; and (b) reality as understood by unenlightened humans, whose illusory understanding stems from what they observe in nature and from habit.

2. Reality accepted according to logical reasoning refers to reality expressed as theories which scholars arrive at by research and/or reasoning. It includes four kinds: (a) truths scientists reach by experimentation; (b) truths philosophers reach by intellectual inquiry; (c) truths theists reach through contact with a God or gods; and (d) truths reached through meditation by those who practice mental stabilization and concentration.

3. Reality of cognitive activity purified of the afflictive hindrances refers to the reality realized by the transcendent noble ones through liberating insight. This reality is subdivided into two categories: (a) the truth of the emptiness of self (S. pudgala-nairatmya or atmanairatmya; C. wokong) realized by Shravakas and pratyekabuddhas of the Nikaya path; and (b) the truth of the emptiness of self partially realized by Mahayana noble ones.

4. Reality of cognitive activity purified of the noetic hindrances refers to the reality of the emptiness of phenomena (S. dharmanairatmya; C. fakong) realized by the full enlightenment of Mahayana noble ones. This reality is also subdivided into two categories: (a) the reality of a bodhisattva's partial realization of the emptiness of phenomena; and (b) the reality of the emptiness of phenomena realized by a completely enlightened Buddha.

Buddhists do not arbitrarily form opinions, and do not rashly deny the truths of others. Instead, they categorize and rank various kinds of truth, putting each in its appropriate place and giving each the value it deserves. One kind of theistic religion frequently rejects the value of anything different from its own beliefs, calling such things “satanic.” Buddhists will never act in such an imperious manner. They accept all four types of reality discussed above as truths: it is just that some truths are more lofty and profound than others.

Among the so-called truths in this world, those least able to stand up to testing are the truths of common sense. What’s accepted as common sense in the past often becomes today’s joke, and what people believe is common sense in one place is often a topic of humorous gossip elsewhere. Truths discovered by students of various disciplines—whether discovered through experiment, reasoning, mystical experiences from contact with a God or gods, or cultivation of body and mind through breathing exercises and meditation—may be true to a certain extent, but such truth is always temporary, illusory, partial, and provisional; it is not eternal and unchanging.

Attaining the highest truth of Buddhism is a result of having realized the emptiness of the self and of phenomena. Upon realizing the emptiness of self, one breaks off the afflictive hindrances and is liberated from samsara; upon realizing the emptiness of phenomena, one breaks off the noetic hindrances and will not abide in nirvana. The Diamond Sutra explains [how an enlightened one perceives] the emptiness of self with the phrase, “There is no conception of a self, an individual identity, a being, or a personal soul.” Moreover,

the expression, “Afflictions are precisely bodhi (enlightenment), and samsara is precisely nirvana (perfect quiescence),” describes the state of having realized the emptiness of phenomena. The subtle principle of the middle path, not falling into either extreme of non-existence (S. abhava; C. kong) or [inherent] existence (S. bhava; C. you), can only be attained by those who have realized the emptiness of phenomena.

The ultimate truth in Buddhism—the realization of the two emptinesses—is beyond mundane phenomena, and beyond description. This truth that is said to be “separate from verbalization and conceptualization” is the final truth; if we insist on labeling it, we could call it the One True Dharma Realm (yizhen fajie) or the Substance-Principle of Suchness (zhenru liti). The ultimate reality in Buddhism, though ineffable, is not separate from worldly phenomena. Each of the myriad phenomena of this world is one part of the ultimate reality. Therefore, Chan Master Huineng said, “The Dharma is of the world; enlightenment is not realized apart from the world. If one seeks bodhi [enlightenment] outside the world, it is like searching for the horns on a rabbit.” The reason Buddhism talks about emptiness is so that both the afflictive hindrances of self-attachment and the noetic hindrances of attachment to dharmas can be dissolved or “emptied”—it is not to deny the existence of worldly phenomena. The truth in Buddhism lies in enlightenment. Only after one has enlightened oneself can the cycle of birth and death be transcended. Only after one has enlightened oneself and can preach the liberating Dharma to others can one deliver sentient beings. Only after one has completed an enlightened course of action to perfection can one become a Buddha.

Beginner's Mind Retreat

Teacher / Guo Gu

March 28 - March 30

June 6 - June 12

Dharma Drum Retreat Center

“Beginner’s mind” in the Chan tradition describes a fresh and open attitude toward life in the present moment, free from preconceived notions and expectations. It is a mind open to genuine understanding and self-realization.

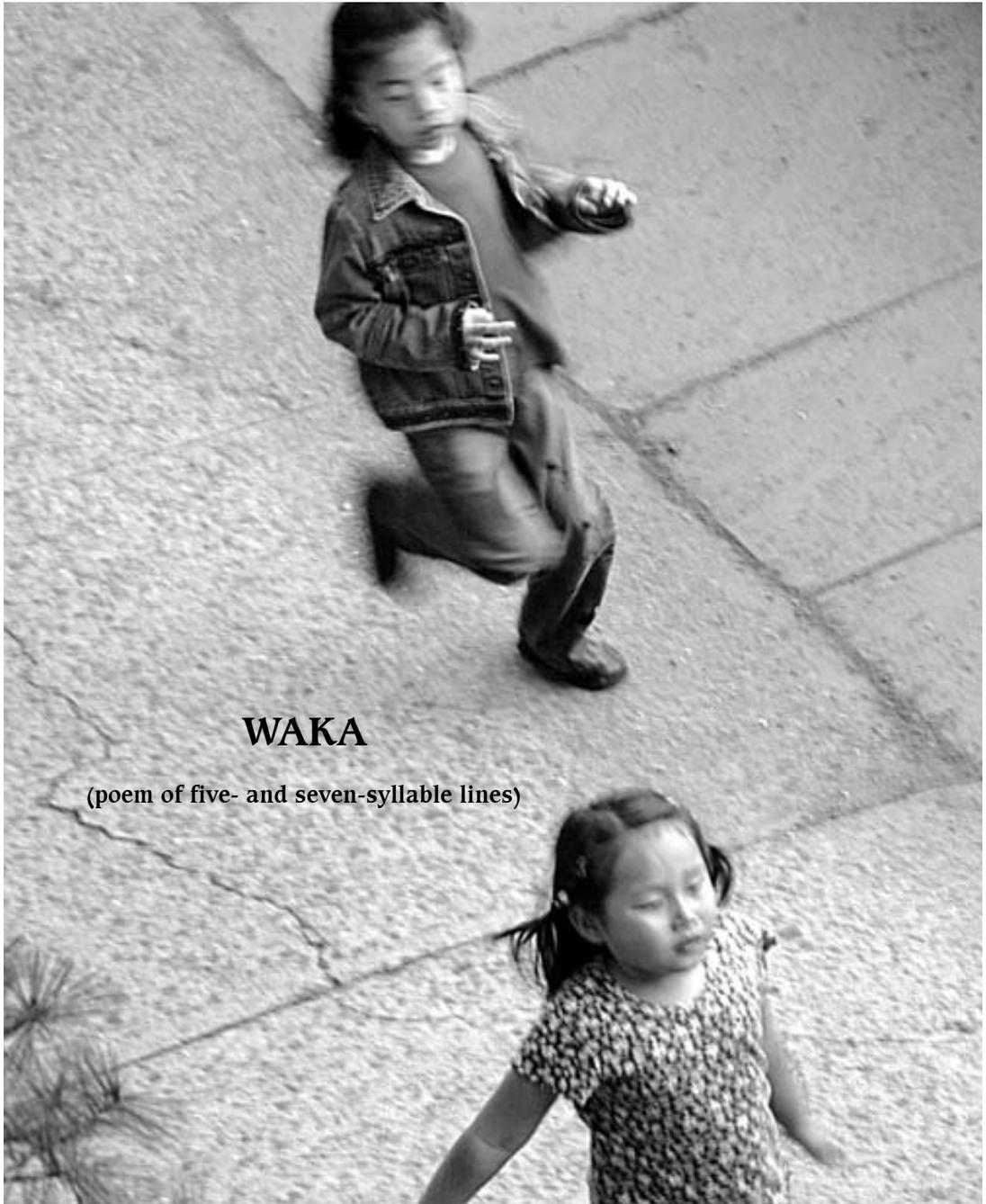
If you have never participated in a Chan retreat, the Beginner’s Mind Retreat is an ideal way to begin your spiritual journey. It is a wonderful opportunity to explore Chan Buddhism through the practice of mindfulness. Experienced practitioners who may have only a few days to spare are also encouraged to deepen their practice.



Guo Gu is a senior lay teacher at the Chan Meditation Center and Dharma Drum Mountain and one of Master Sheng Yen’s main translators. In 1982, while still quite young, he learned meditation from Master Sheng Yen. He was the

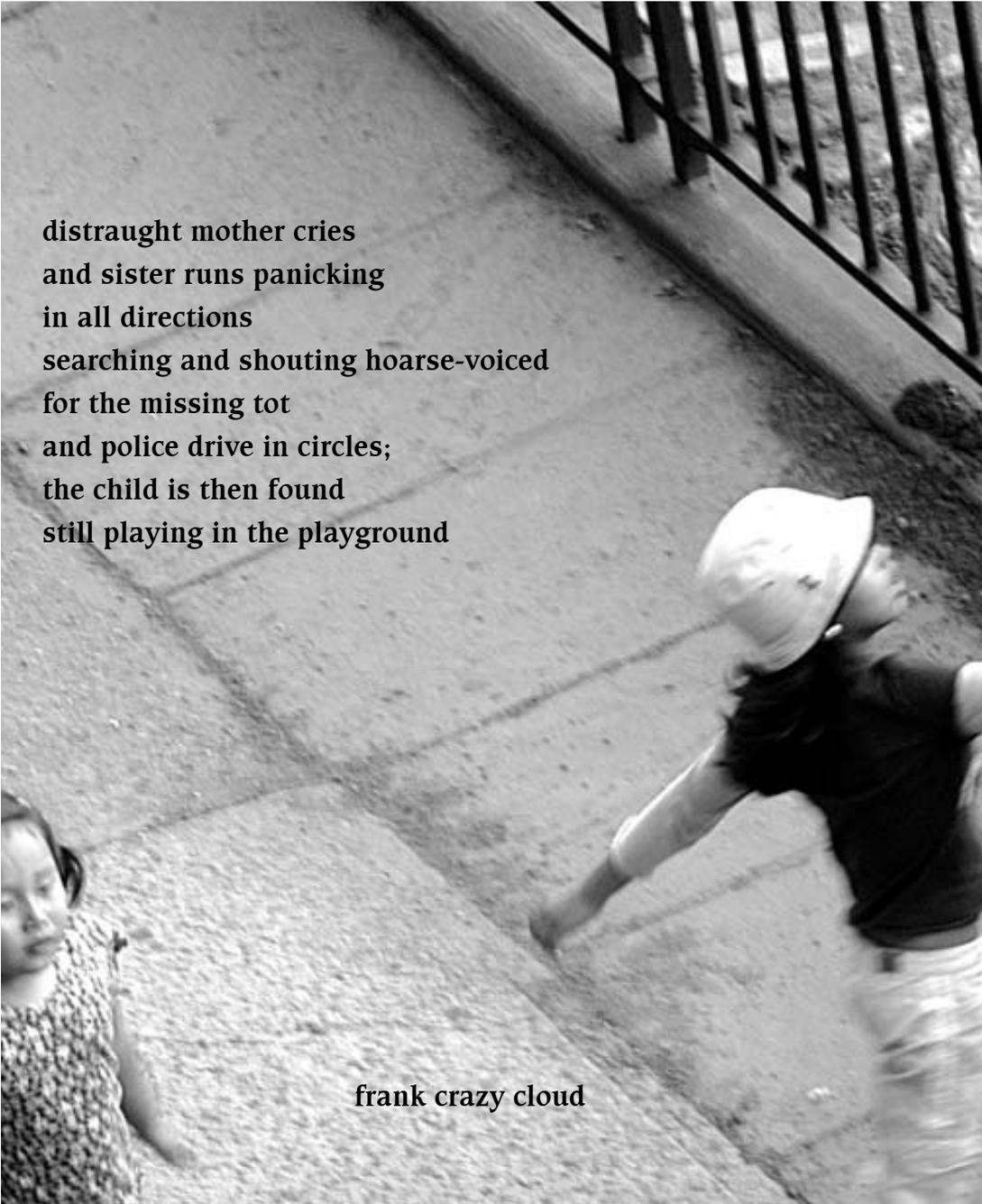
personal monastic attendant and assistant to master Sheng Yen for almost nine years. In 1995 he received permission to teach (inka) from Chan from Master Sheng Yen. He has led retreats in various parts of the United States, Europe, and Asia. Guo Gu is now the guiding teacher for Western Dharma and meditation teachers at the Chan Meditation Center. He is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Religion at Princeton University.

For More Information and registration:
<http://www.dharmadrumretreat.org>



WAKA

(poem of five- and seven-syllable lines)



**distraught mother cries
and sister runs panicking
in all directions
searching and shouting hoarse-voiced
for the missing tot
and police drive in circles;
the child is then found
still playing in the playground**

frank crazy cloud

Photo: Jerry Roach

FRIENDS OF THE BUDDHA

A Play in Three Scenes
About the Animals of the Chinese Zodiac

To be performed to celebrate the Chinese New Year

by
Noah Heau and Ernest Heau

Foreword

This play, Friends of the Buddha, is based on an old Chinese legend about how twelve animals came to be identified with the twelve-year cycle of the Chinese Zodiac. The play is a retelling of the legend of the ailing Buddha inviting all the animals in the realm to visit him. The authors have tried to portray the animals as having the personas commonly associated with them in the Chinese Zodiac, and indeed, in many other cultures. To enhance the play dramatically, the authors have given the role of the Buddha some lines to speak. These lines are our literary renderings, not the recorded sayings of the Buddha. However, as much as possible, the authors have taken care to make these lines accord with their understanding of the teachings of the Buddha. Any shortcomings in this respect are solely the authors' fault.

This play is meant to be performed by children in celebration of the Chinese Lunar New Year. All the roles may be performed by actors of either gender. For a minimally staged version, the animals may wear simple masks and/or headwear appropriate to their personas. The animal actors may double as mimes, but while doing so they do not wear their animal costumes. After leaving home, the Buddha should appear in the robe of a monk.

"Friends of the Buddha" is protected by copyright. It may however be performed without restriction and without royalty.

The Characters

(In order of appearance)

Narrator, Buddha, five mimes, Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog, Pig, Cat (Except for the Cat, every Chinese New Year, one of the above animals becomes the Honoree)

SCENE ONE

(The words of the narrator are accompanied by brief pantomimes appropriate to the words. The number of mimes needed varies. In place of the word "Honoree" the Narrator should say the name of the New Year's animal.)

NARRATOR:

Brothers and sisters, welcome to the Year of the (Honoree).

Do you know how this came to be the Year of the (Honoree)?

Here is a legend of how the twelve years of the Zodiac Came to be named after twelve wonderful animals.

(Enter Buddha and mimes)

Once in India there lived a prince named Siddhartha.

He was loved by his family, and he had a very happy life.

(Pantomime: Siddhartha in family life.)

But when he was young, he saw many scenes of suffering:

Old age, sickness, and death, and this made him very sad.

(Pantomime: witnesses scenes of suffering.)

He vowed to find the way to relieve peoples' suffering.

To do this, he left home and became a monk living in the forest.

(Pantomime: Siddhartha with fellow monks.)

For many years he lived simply and meditated long,

Until one day, he became an enlightened Buddha.

(Pantomime: alone under bodhi tree and becoming enlightened.)

From that day on, the Buddha shared his discovery

With all who would listen to his wise teachings.

(Pantomime: first sermon to five disciples.)

For many years the Buddha traveled far and wide

To bring his message of kindness to others.

(Pantomime: walking, begging, and teaching with followers.)

Being also human, one day the Buddha became ill.

At this time he wanted to see his friends, the animals.

(Pantomime: reclining on side on bed, with followers attending.)

And the message went out to field, forest, and farm:

That the Buddha is ailing and wishes their company.

(Pantomime: Messengers call in all directions, gesturing "come," exiting.)

SCENE TWO

(The Buddha reclines on his side, on a bed in the so-called paranirvana posture. In this scene the animals are encouraged to act and speak appropriately to their personas. In this scene the word "Dharma" is used. For audiences that may not be familiar with the Sanskrit word for the teachings of the Buddha, "teachings" or "truth" may be substituted.)

NARRATOR:

Thus the journey of the noble animals began.
From field, forest, and farm they came.

And then they appeared after their long journeys,
To greet and honor their beloved Lord Buddha.

(Each animal enters in turn, bows to the Buddha, turns and speaks to the audience, then sits joining the group. The bow is done from the waist, palms together, head and eyes down. After each animal speaks, the Buddha smiles and nods.)

RAT:

Greetings, friends of the Buddha!
I am Brother Rat, always charming,
Always planning to have some fun.
But Sister Cat can be alarming
When she's near I'd better run!
(Looks around cautiously.)

OX:

Greetings, friends of the Buddha!
I am the Ox, a beast of burden,
Slow of foot but good at heart.
I'll do my job until I am done,
I am always there to pull my cart.
(Mimes pulling a cart.)

TIGER:

Greetings, friends of the Buddha!
Call me Tiger but don't offend me!
My claws are sharp, my mind is keen
But if to me you will be friendly
I promise you I won't be mean! (Roars)

RABBIT:

Greetings, friends of the Buddha!
I am Sister Rabbit, mother of nine

I must keep my children safe.
I want them always to be kind
And yes, forever to behave.
(Wags finger at audience)

DRAGON:

Greetings, friends of the Buddha!
Behold my friends, I am the Dragon,
Good fortune is my gift to you.
Although my home is in the heavens,
I guard the earth and ocean blue.
(Rears on hind legs and spreads wings)

SNAKE:

Greetings, friends of the Buddha!
I am Slither the Snake and very long,
I am very wise but have no legs.
I know what's right and what is wrong.
Now let me ask you, do snakes lay eggs?
(Slithers away, laughing.)

HORSE:

Greetings, friends of the Buddha!
I am Horse, the graceful galloper,
I run with friends across the plain.
We escape to lands near and far,
And never bother to explain.
(Rising in hind legs and neighing.)

GOAT:

Greetings, friends of the Buddha!
High in the hills I live apart
Under the starry skies I dream.
With my sharp hooves and valiant heart,
I am Goat, the climber supreme.
(Miming clambering up a hill)

MONKEY:

Greetings, friends of the Buddha!
I am the Monkey, I am never still;
My mind is quick but seldom calm.
I can leap over valleys and hills,

But always land in the Buddha's palm.
(Scurries away as Tiger nips his tail.)

ROOSTER:

Greetings, friends of the Buddha!
When dark turns to light I, Rooster,
Am there to greet the rising sun.
My crowing makes the dawn come faster;
And when day breaks, my work is done.
(Crows)

DOG:

Greetings, friends of the Buddha!
I am the Dog, a loyal friend,
But if you're a thief, don't come near!
You'll hear me barking now and then,
But if I like you, have no fear.
(Barks, then wags tail)

PIG:

Greetings, friends of the Buddha!
People say that the Pig is smart,
And quite humbly, I will agree.
Even so it gives me a start
When they invite me in for tea.
(Curtsies)

NARRATOR:

After all the animals have greeted the Lord
Buddha
We learn that of the animals in the forest,
only twelve came.

Even so the Lord Buddha was very pleased to
see them.
And he rose from his resting place, sat, and
spoke.



Photo: Jerry Roach

(Buddha sits up from reclining position, greets animals with joined palms then places both palms on his knees.)

BUDDHA:

Welcome noble friends of the Buddha.
My time on this plane of suffering is short
And soon I will enter blessed nirvana.
Even so, I will be with you always,
Among the greatest of beasts,
And among the smallest of creatures.

For the nature of the awakened Buddha
Resides in every being that lives,
Just as the fragrance resides in the rose.

Come forward each of you, one by one,
So that I may bless and reward you
For your faith and your diligence.

(Each animal in turn approaches the Buddha,
bows, speak its lines. Buddha speaks and
touches their forehead as he says, "In your
honor..." Animal bows and returns to seat.)

RAT:

Lord Buddha,
May the fragrance of your deeds
Reach into the farthest heavens.

BUDDHA:

Well said, noble Rat.
In your honor, the first year of the Zodiac
Shall be called The Year of the Rat.

OX:

Lord Buddha,
May your compassion rain gently
On all the fields of the universe.

BUDDHA:

Well said, noble Ox.
In your honor, the second year of the Zodiac
Shall be called the year of the Ox.

TIGER:

Lord Buddha,
May the sound of your voice
Be heard by the smallest of creatures!

BUDDHA:

Well said, noble Tiger.
In your honor, the third year of the Zodiac
Shall be called The Year of the Tiger.

RABBIT:

Lord Buddha,
May your loving and tender care
Be felt by all mothers and children!

BUDDHA:

Well said, noble Rabbit.
In your honor, the fourth year of the Zodiac
Shall be called The Year of the Rabbit.

DRAGON:

Lord Buddha,
May the precious Body of Truth
Extend through all time and all space!

BUDDHA:

Well said, noble Dragon.
In your honor, the fifth year of the Zodiac
Shall be called The Year of the Dragon.

SNAKE:

Lord Buddha,
May the light of your wisdom
Shine brightly on all creatures!

BUDDHA:

Well said, noble Snake.
In your honor, the sixth year of the Zodiac
Shall be called The Year of the Snake.

HORSE:

Lord Buddha,
May your teachings be heard
By all creatures born and yet to be born!

BUDDHA:

Well said, noble Horse.
In your honor, the seventh year of the Zodiac
Shall be called The Year of the Horse.

GOAT:

Lord Buddha,
May the true teachings reach
The highest mountains and the lowest valleys.

BUDDHA:

Well said, noble Goat.
In your honor, the eighth year of the Zodiac
Shall be called The Year of the Goat.

MONKEY:

Lord Buddha,
May your sweet words flow like a breeze
Through the countless trees of the forest.

BUDDHA:

Well said, noble Monkey.
In your honor, the ninth year of the Zodiac
Shall be called The Year of the Monkey.

ROOSTER:

Lord Buddha,
May hearing the Dharma
Awaken dreamers from their restless sleep.



Photo: Jerry Roach

BUDDHA:

Well said, noble Rooster.
In your honor, the tenth year of the Zodiac
Shall be called The Year of the Rooster.

DOG:

Lord Buddha,
May followers of the Way
Be always faithful, loyal, and alert.

BUDDHA:

Well said, noble Dog.
In your honor, the eleventh year of the
Zodiac
Shall be called The Year of the Dog.

PIG:

Lord Buddha,
May the animals of the forest and the fields
Always remember the World Honored One.

BUDDHA:

Well said, noble Pig.
In your honor, the twelfth year of the Zodiac
Shall be called The Year of the Pig.

(Buddha stands.)
From this time forward, when the year turns,
One of you will be honored by name
For as long as we measure the passing of
time.

But remember this, my friends:
All things that live suffer constant change
And time flies like a bird on the wing.

Therefore, let the happiness that you seek
Be the happiness of those in need.
This is the best use of one's share of time.

Now I bid you all farewell, my friends.
Work with diligence for your own salvation,
And always be kind to one another.

(Narrator and animals help the Buddha to
exit. They return to stage.
Animals chat in stage whisper.)

SCENE THREE

(As animals chat, Cat suddenly enters, angrily
confronts Rat.)

CAT:

There you are, Rat!
Brother Rat, you promised to wake me so that
I could come!

RAT:

(Surprised)
Hello, Sister Cat!
(Hesitates)
I am sorry, I just forgot.

CAT:

Because of you I did not see the Lord Bud-
dha!

RAT:

Well, I am sorry but that is your karma.

CAT:

And here is *your* karma!
(Chases Rat, claws extended)

SNAKE:

(Stops them)
Remember, the Buddha's words:
Be kind to one another.
(Cat and Rat pause and look at each other,
arms folded.)

RAT:

All right, it was my fault.
I should have remembered to wake you.

CAT:

No, actually it was my fault,
I shouldn't be such a sleepy head.

RAT:

No, it was my fault.

CAT:

No, my fault.

CAT and RAT:

(Together and repeatedly):
No, my fault.
(Cat chases Rat again.)

PIG:

(Stops them)
You were both at fault.
Now shake hands and be friends.

ALL OTHER ANIMALS:

You were both at fault.
Shake hands and be friends!
(Cat and Rat shake hands, bow to each other,
animals cheer.)

NARRATOR:

And that is how the animals of the Zodiac
Came to be chosen by their beloved Lord Bud-
dha.

When we celebrate each new year,
We honor one lucky animal among the
twelve.

In this, the year (lunar year number), we hon-
or the (Honoree).
Welcome, friends of the Buddha, to the Year
of the (Honoree)!

(Honoree takes center stage. Animals gather
around and throw rose petals at Honoree. They
wish audience a Happy New Year (in English
and Chinese). Animals then walk among au-
dience, throwing rose petals at them.)

End



Photo: Jerry Roach

The Past

News from the Chan Meditation Center and the DDMBA Worldwide

CNBC's *Karma Trekkers* Visits DDM

CNBC's *Karma Trekkers* paid a special visit to the Dharma Drum Mountain World Center for Buddhist Education, Taiwan, on September 17 -18 to conduct interviews with the sangha's monastics and to film the campus for a short piece on DDM, to be aired on their television program, which broadcasts worldwide in English. Abbot President Venerable Guo Dong, Venerables Guo Yuan, Chang Zhi, Chang Hwa, Chang Ji, and Chang Wen all participated, speaking about the history, purpose, ethos, concepts, and practices of DDM, including the 5-Fold Spiritual Renaissance, the story behind the building location of the

Chan Hall, and a short introduction to the Eight Forms of Moving Meditation and sitting meditation practice.

After the two days of filming and interviewing, the *Trekkers* had enough footage for an hour or so of television, and they had found the visit so inspiring that they plan to make a full-length documentary about DDM, in addition to the short piece on *Karma Trekkers*. They therefore plan to go to the Dharma Drum Retreat Center as well as the Chan Meditation Center, to interview the sangha there, and get some footage of DDM's activities in the United States.

– Chang Wen



Graduation Day at DDM

On September 16, Dharma Drum Mountain (DDM) hosted a Graduation Ceremony for 31 students of the Chung Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies, Dharma Drum Sangha University, and the Chinese-Tibetan Buddhist Cultural Exchange Program at the International Conference Hall of DDM's World Center for Buddhist Education in Jinshan, Taipei.

At the same time, inauguration of the new graduate program in Buddhist studies took place, with the enrollment of 15 graduate students, accompanying 45 undergrads.

Master Sheng Yen urged students to exercise compassion and bring to bear their hard-won language skills to promote understanding of Chinese Buddhism in the international setting, with a view to offsetting a certain lack of regard that has beset it in the past.

Abbot Guo Dong also encouraged his listeners to carry forward Master Sheng Yen's teachings and care for all sentient beings.

In closing, students were presented with four gifts: a cup, a book of the Master's 108 Adages, a lunch box, and a mirror, which correspond to the four Chinese characters that comprise the University motto: "Compassion, Wisdom, Harmony and Respect."

Love of Life

In a ceremony at the Sherwood Taipei Hotel on September 9, DDM Taiwan presented its first "Loving Life Award" to the Teacher Chang Foundation and Ms. Wu Meili, Chief Executive Officer of the Life Shepherd Association.

After an extensive and thorough review of applications, the Teacher Chang Foundation was selected for its long-standing contributions to suicide prevention and spiritual counseling for young people. Ms. Wu Meili, who has wholeheartedly committed herself to the challenge of suicide prevention in society, received the award for her individual contributions in this area.

In opening remarks, Venerable Master Sheng Yen noted that suicide is an irresponsible act, bereft of wisdom or compassion. As we face the difficulty of life, we must learn to "face it, accept it, deal with it, let go of it," finding new solutions along the way.

DDM Abbot Ven. Guo Deng also shared some thoughts, emphasizing that DDM was seeking to give the people of Taiwan a positive view of life.

Wang Jin-Pyng, president of the Yuan Legislature, acknowledged that suicide prevention is a daunting and urgent challenge. He pointed out that many lives could be saved if people merely reflected for an additional two minutes before committing suicide, in conjunction with Master Sheng Yen's exhortation to do this.

Chiu Dercai, chief executive officer of the Teacher Chang Foundation, affirmed that life is precious, and yet so many people are ready to give up, invoking a range of excuses.

In accepting the award, Wu Meili shared some her own experiences, and observed that the reasons people commit suicide are many and complex. A way we can help, she suggested, is to accompany them genuinely, extending our sympathy, and identifying with their anguish

in such a way that they may grasp a positive energy within themselves.

INEB Visits DDM

On September 3, a 53-member delegation of the International Network for Engaged Buddhists (INEB) visited the Dharma Drum Mountain World Center for Buddhist Education in Jinshan, Taipei. The group consisted of lay practitioners, Bhikshus (monks) and Bhikshunis (nuns) from Japan, Korea, Australia, Great Britain, India, the United States, Vietnam, Cambodia, Nepal, Tibet, Sri Lanka and Myanmar.

The International Network for Engaged Buddhists was founded in Thailand in 1989, and now has members from more than 20 countries. It is grounded in compassion, non-violence and co-existence as expounded by the Buddha.

DDM Abbot Ven. Guo Dong greeted the delegation on behalf of Venerable Master Sheng Yen and presented a video on DDM.

INEB founder Sulak Sivaraksa thanked his hosts for their hospitality, noting it was his second visit to the facility, having attended the Center's opening ceremony in October 2005.

After the video, Ven. Hui Min, President of Dharma Drum Buddhist College, spoke about the cultivation of talent to promote Buddhist education. The key objective is to foster three types of education: 1) Education through Public Outreach; 2) Caring Service; and 3) Academic study, with the aim of "building a pure land on earth".

When one INEB member commented on the high level of dedication of DDM volunteers, Ven. Guo Jing, Vice President of DDM Sangha University, credited them with expressing a true Bodhisattva spirit of altruism, explaining that the Center could not function without the volunteers' contributions.

Israeli Representative Visits DDM

On the morning of August 14, the Representative of the Israeli Economic and Cultural Office (ISECO) in Taipei, Mr. Raphael Gamzou and his wife, Mrs. Michal Gamzou, paid their first visit to Dharma Drum Mountain World Center for Buddhist Education in Jinshan, Taipei.

Mrs. Shirley Lin (Lin Xiuer) gave them a guided tour, explaining Venerable Master Sheng Yen's vision for the Center, its history and architectural features.

DDM Abbot Ven. Guo Dong greeted them on behalf of Master Sheng Yen and spoke of the need for inner peace as a prerequisite for peace in the world.

Mr. Gamzou concurred, speaking of suicide bombers, and how hatred is generated by minds without peace.

After a vegetarian lunch, Ven. Guo Dong presented the visitors with a wooden tablet inscribed with the Chinese characters for "Peace and Harmony," together with a collection of Master Sheng Yen's English publications.

As they passed the Bodhi wishing tree on their way out, Mr. Gamzou wrote down his wishes and hung them on the tree, in a gesture of "building a pure land on earth."

Aid for Typhoon Victims

When Typhoon Krosa swept through Taiwan at the beginning of October it brought devastation with it.

DDM swiftly activated its emergency relief infrastructure, mobilizing Dharma Drum Social Welfare and Charity Foundation's troupe of volunteers to monitor the typhoon's impact, as volunteers pressed ahead with assistance activities despite continuing hazards posed by the typhoon.

On the night of October 6th, a Mr. Chiou and his son were buried alive in the Shihlin district of Taipei when their residence was completely engulfed by a mudslide set loose by the torrential rains. Upon hearing of this, Wenya Liao, convener of DDM emergency relief for the district, went to the hospital with volunteers to provide support for the family and to chant Buddhist Sutras for the departed.

In Hsinchu, DDM volunteers prepared relief supplies in anticipation of residents' needs in the Jianshih district where road access was cut by mudslides. The foundation also offered monetary support to people living the disaster area to help them get back on their feet as quickly as possible.

According to Ven. Sheng Yen, a bodhisattva moves into action whenever and wherever anyone calls for help.

Earthquake Relief in Peru

On August 15, a deadly earthquake measuring 7.9 on the Richter scale struck southern Peru, claiming over 500 lives, injuring thousands and leaving tens of thousands home-

less. On August 19, an aftershock measuring 5.7 magnitude shook the region.

The city of Pisco was hardest hit, with 70 of its structures destroyed, while paralysis of local transportation and communications networks hampered initial relief efforts.

Ven. Master Sheng Yen responded immediately after the first quake, instructing the DDM Social Welfare and Charity Foundation to join forces with the DDMBA in the United States to form a relief team. Early on the morning of August 22 the team arrived in Lima, Peru, including Mr. Lee Haotso, Ms. Chen Yunsan, Mr. Yen Jongbin and Mr. Paul Kennedy from DDMBA, bearing letters of condolence from Master Sheng Yen and DDM Abbot Ven. Guo Dong. By the end of the day the team had made it to San Clemente, where 80% of all structures had suffered total or major damage, leaving some 15,000 people homeless.

Deploying a budget of \$10,000 granted by DDM, and drawing on the assistance of Huang Liensheng, representative of Taiwan's Economic and Cultural Office in Peru, parliamentary representative Edgar Nuñez Román, who lost his wife in the quake, and Taiwanese businessmen residing in Peru, the team quickly secured relief materials, including staples such as rice, cooking oil, milk and sugar.

On August 25, team members convened to assess the most expedient methods for distributing relief, and on August 26 they set out for the Pisco region, where materials were given out in Tambo de Mora, San Clemente, and at a local university. All in all, the DDM relief operation provided material and spiritual assistance to some 1600 households, upwards of 5000 quake victims.

DDM Celebrates Moon Festival

In Chinese society the Mid-Autumn Festival, also known as the Moon Festival, is traditionally a day of family gatherings. To celebrate this special day, Dharma Drum Mountain (DDM) hosted a gala last September at the DDM World Center for Buddhist Education in Jinshan, Taipei.

In the course of the afternoon families were invited to try their skill at Taiwanese folk arts, Chinese crochet, sewing of cloth dolls, flower arranging, pottery and kite-making.

Afterwards, some 200 people assembled in the Great Buddha Hall for the evening's activities, featuring young children playing drums, and a speech by DDM Abbot, Ven. Guo Dong, in which he exhorted all present to cherish their encounters with one another and work on purifying their minds.

DDM Vancouver Marks First Anniversary

To commemorate its September 2006 founding, DDM Vancouver initiated several weeks of activities, including a Samadhi Water Repentance Assembly, a Ksitigarbha (Di Zhuang) Assembly, a Seven-Day Chan Retreat from August 31 to September 7, and a Garden Party on September 16 attended by Vancouver Mayor Sam Sullivan and Mr. Kung Chung-Chen, representative of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (TECO).

As he congratulated DDM on its anniversary, the Mayor introduced a personal note to the proceedings with the story of how a skiing accident had left him a quadriplegic at the age of 19. Looking back, he now says, "If I could only have heard Master Sheng Yen's teachings at that time, I would not have suffered so much."



Photo: Kaifen Hu

The Future

*Retreats, classes and
other upcoming events.*

At Dharma Drum Retreat Center in Pine Bush, NY

Phone: (845) 744-8114

E-mail: ddrc@dharmadrumretreat.org

Website: www.dharmadrumretreat.org

Chan Retreats

Intensive Chan retreats are opportunities for serious practitioners to deepen their practice and receive guidance from resident teachers. Introductory and other one- to seven-day retreats are scheduled throughout the year.

Schedule is subject to change. Please check the website for updated information.

Three-, Five-, Seven-, and Ten-day Introductory Silent Illumination Retreat at DDRC with Ven. Chi Chern Fashi and Ven. Guojun Fashi

Friday, February 29 to Sunday, March 9
Flexible choices: A three-, five- or seven-day period, or the whole ten-day retreat.

Seven-day Koan Retreat, Drs. John Crook and Simon Child at DDRC

Saturday, March 15 to Saturday, March 22

Regular Activity

Thursday evening meditation, 7:00-9:00 pm

At Chan Meditation Center in Elmhurst, Queens, NY

Phone: (718) 592-6593

E-mail: ddmbaus@yahoo.com

Website: www.chancenter.org or

www.ddmba.org

Weekly Activities

Monday Night Chanting

7:00 – 9:15 pm Last Monday of the month:
Recitation of the Eighty-eight Buddhas' names and repentance

Tuesday Night Sitting Group

7:00 – 9:45 pm: Sitting, yoga exercises, walking meditation, Dharma discussions, recitation of the Heart Sutra and social hour

Saturday Sitting Group

9:00 am – 3:00 pm: Sitting, yoga exercises, walking meditation

Sunday Open House

10:00 - 11:00 am: meditation

11:00 am - 12:30 pm: Dharma lectures

12:30 - 1:00 pm: lunch offerings

1:00 - 2:00 pm: lunch

2:00 - 3:00 pm: Q & A for English-speaking practitioners & chanting (the second Sunday of the month devoted to the chanting of The Great Compassion Dharani Sutra, 2:00 – 4:00)

Retreats

Three-day College Retreat

Thursday, January 10 to Sunday, January 13
Pre-registration required

One-day Saturday Retreats

January 26, February 23, March 29

Classes

Meditation Classes

Beginner and intermediate classes of two sessions each for a total of four sessions.
Saturdays, 9:30 am – 12 noon.

Call or e-mail CMC for scheduled dates.
Pre-registration required

Taijiquan with Instructor David Ngo

Thursdays, 7:30-9:00 pm, ongoing
\$25 per month, \$80 for 16 classes
First Thursday of the month is free for newcomers

Yoga instructor Rikki Asher is on sabbatical leave; classes will resume upon her return.

Special Events

Chinese New Year Celebration

Sunday, February 10, 10:00 am – 3:00 pm

“Zen & Inner Peace”

Chan Master Sheng Yen's weekly television program, Sunday, 7:00 a.m., WNYE (Channel 25)



Photo: Kaifen Hu

Chan Center Affiliates

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

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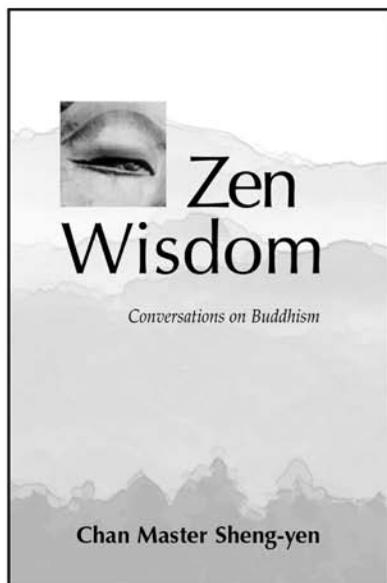
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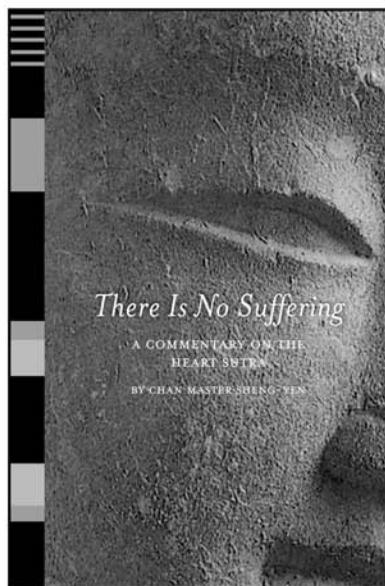


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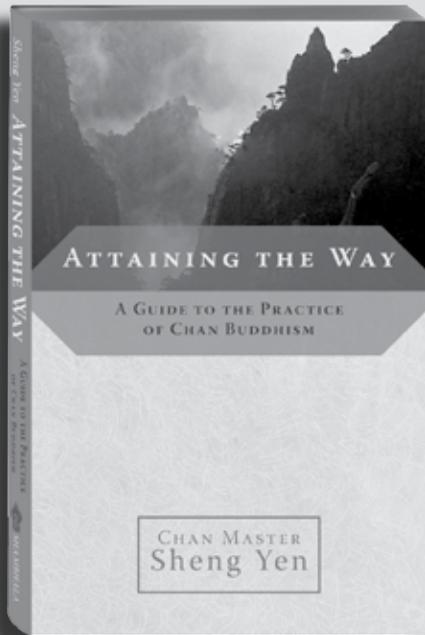
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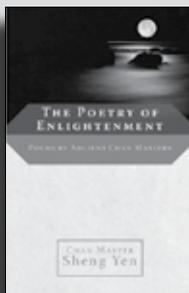


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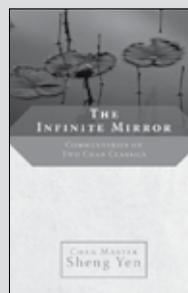


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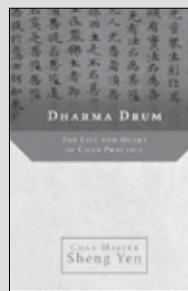


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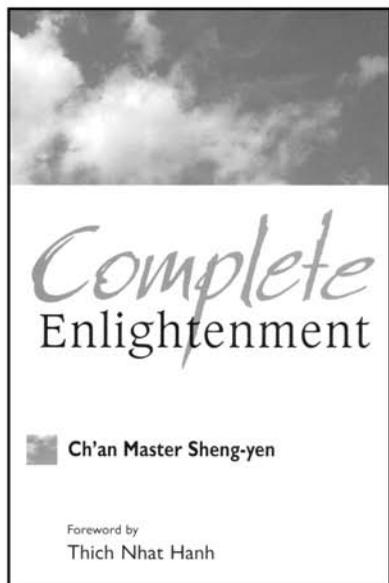
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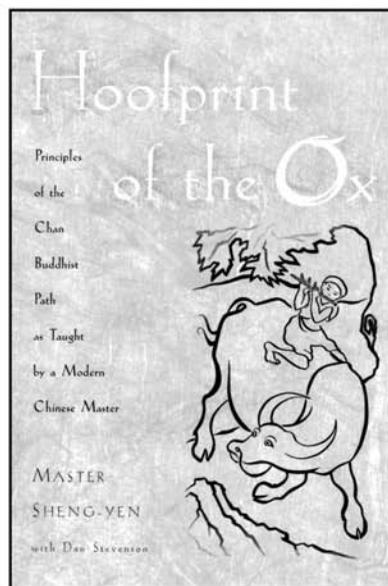
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