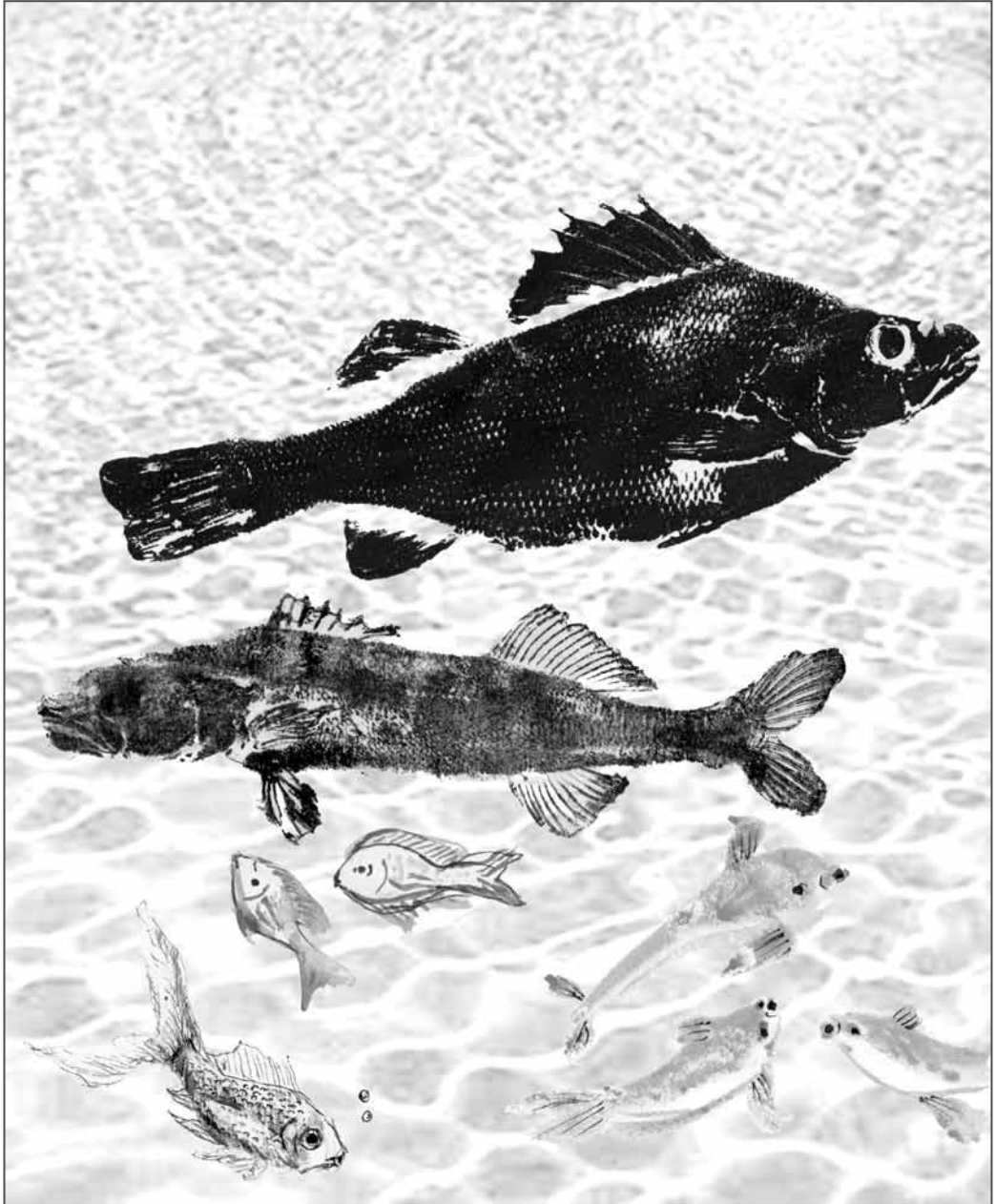


禪
CHAN MAGAZINE
SPRING 2014



“**T**he group of people that originally followed me had also caught up, and came along with us. After walking for a while we saw a big pool in which to free captive fish. The pool was transparent, big and clear, just like a fish tank in an aquarium. We saw how the fish in the pool killed each other. Big fish chased after small fish. Some of the small fish were eaten and some died after running into each other. Many of the people who came along with me asked, “Look, Master, the captive fish that many of us set free are either being eaten or dying from colliding with other fish. Do we still have to set captive animals free?” I thought—these fish are so foolish. What a pity! People set them free, yet they still try to kill one another. But I still said firmly, “Though they eat each other and run into each other, we still have to set them free.” Hearing what I said, they were satisfied and continued to go forward.”

— Chan Master Sheng Yen
“A Dream Narrative” from “Life of Chan”
November 8, 1983



禪
CHAN MAGAZINE
Volume 34, Number 2—Spring 2014

CHAN MAGAZINE

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY Institute of Chung-Hwa Buddhist Culture
Chan Meditation Center (CMC)
90-56 Corona Avenue
Elmhurst, NY 11373

FOUNDER/TEACHER Chan Master Venerable Dr. Sheng Yen

ADMINISTRATOR Venerable Chang Hwa

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Buffe Maggie Laffey

COORDINATOR Chang Jie

PHOTOGRAPHY AND ARTWORK Rikki Asher, Kaifen Hu, Peter Lin,
Taylor Mitchell

COVER ART Rikki Asher and Buffe Maggie Laffey

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS David Berman, Ernie Heau, Guo Gu

CONTRIBUTORS Venerable Chang Ji, Venerable Chang Wen,
Rebecca Li, Shaun Chung, Ting-Hsin Wang,
Bruce Rickenbacker

CHAN MEDITATION CENTER (718) 592-6593

DHARMA DRUM PUBLICATIONS (718) 592-0915

chanmagazine@gmail.com

<http://chancenter.org/cmc/publications/chan-magazines/>

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.

A Dream Narrative by Chan Master Sheng Yen 4

Butterfly Dream by Zhuang Zhou 12

*The Arising of Conditioned Appearance
From the True Mind - Part 3* by Abbot Venerable Guo Xing 14

Training Story by Guo Gu 17

My Mother's Last Gift by Xueshan 20

Retreat Report by Mimi Yu 22

The Contractor by Harry Miller 24

The Past News from CMC, DDMBA and DDRC 29

The Future Retreats, classes and upcoming events 34

Chan Meditation Center Affiliates 36

A Dream Narrative

by

Chan Master Sheng Yen

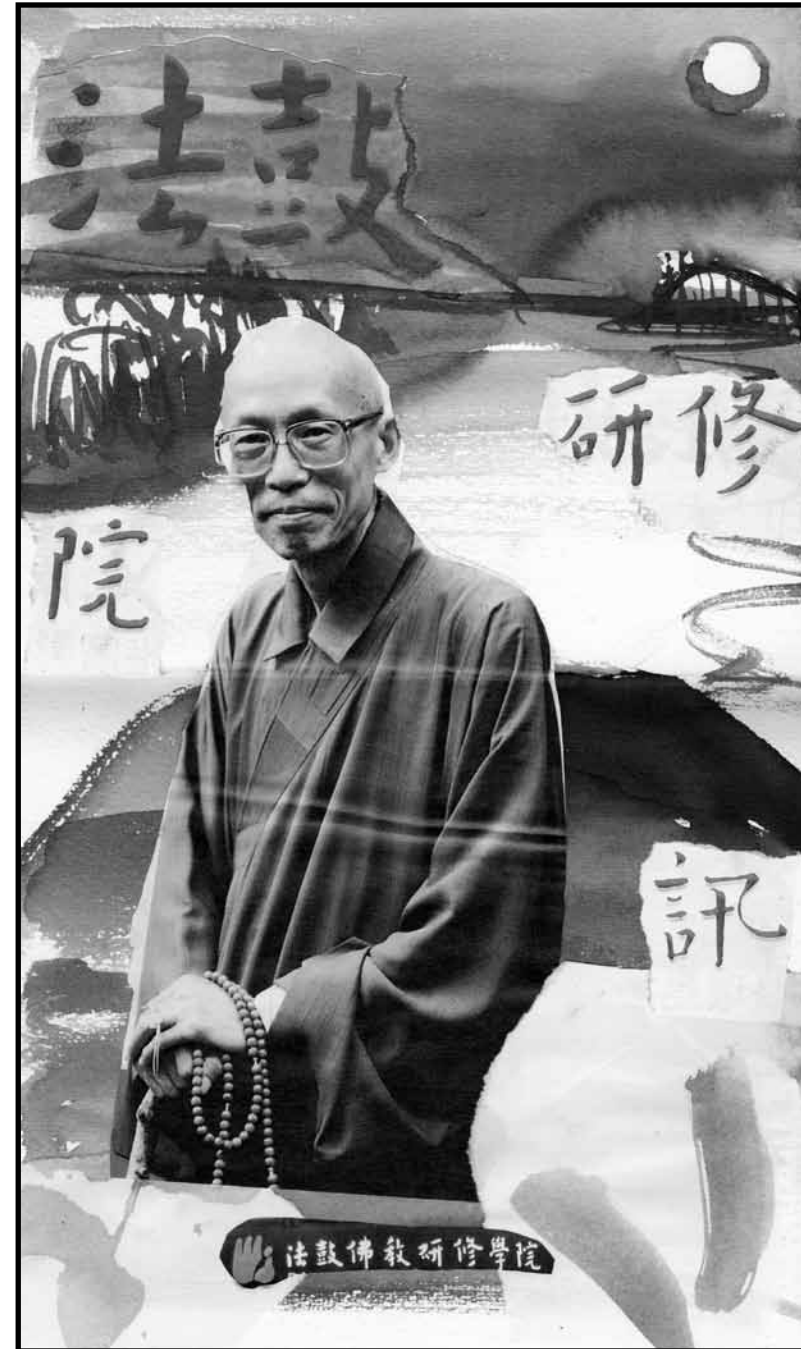
Master Sheng Yen had a dream at the Chan Meditation Center in New York on the morning of November 8, 1983, and dictated it to his disciple Guo Ran. It appears as an Appendix in his book *Life of Chan*. Antonio Hsieh translated the Chinese transcript, with bilingual editing by Chiacheng Chang and Robert Dougherty, English editing by Ernest Heau.

At four o'clock this morning I had a dream so enchanting, it was intoxicating, as if the dream state persisted after I got up in the morning to do sitting meditation and morning service. The dream lasted only a very short time, but it was especially clear and made a deep impression. At four o'clock when I got up, my head was clear, but as soon as I closed my eyes the dream state appeared again. When I woke up, it was just a bit past four o'clock. At the beginning of the dream, I was leading a lot of people to cross over a big mountain. The mountain was overgrown with wild grass, trees, and briar patches, but there were also plots of farmland where farmers were working the fields. At last, when we went past a cultivated plot, the path became so narrow that it was hard not to step on the crops. So we had to walk very cautiously and even had to push plants aside with our hands.

Later we walked up a stone stairway, which was like a footbridge. After walking upward for a bit we made a turn, and then went straight up. When we came to the end of the road we saw a young girl walking down the road, crying loudly. The girl said, "I want to give alms! I want to give alms!" Her mother chased after her, saying, "You're as poor as a ghost. How can you have anything to give?" She said, "I want to give alms even if it means giving my

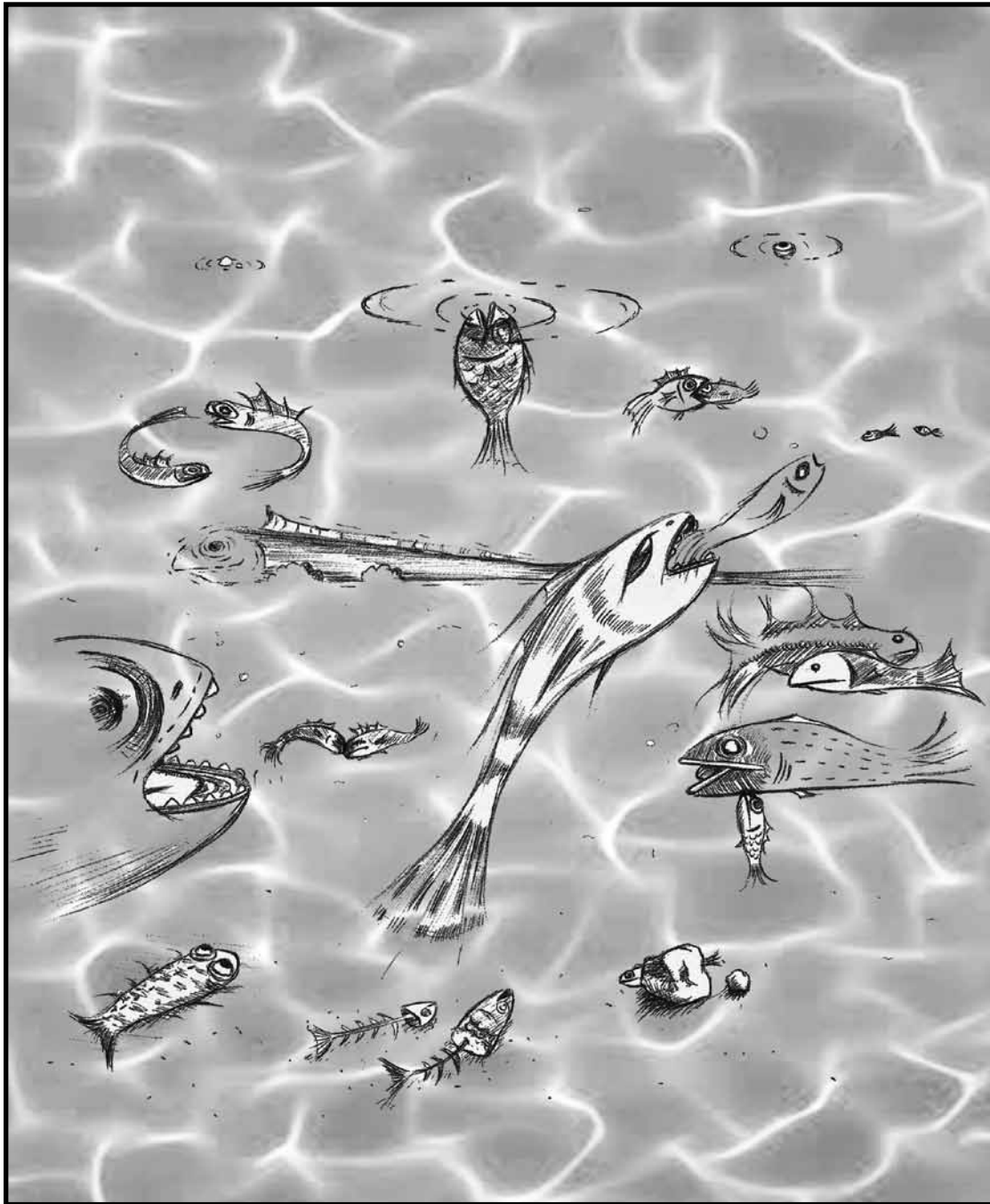
life. I must not give alms just because I'm poor." Her mother grabbed hold of her and took her away, but the girl escaped using another road.

Then some houses appeared, grouped together like a village. I went into one of the houses to rest. An elderly man of 50 or 60 came out and asked me what I was doing. I answered, "I don't know. I brought a group of people up the mountain, but they haven't arrived yet. So I'll rest here and wait for them." He then told me, "There's a place on the back side of the mountain. Do you want to go there? We'll all be going there in a little while." I said, "What kind of place is it?" He said, "Let me make a phone call and ask." When someone answered at the other end, the old man wanted me to take the phone. I didn't know whom I was speaking to so I asked, "What kind of place is this?" I heard a voice that sounded kind of old, but I didn't understand what he said. Then he said in rough Taiwanese, "This is a place for Samantabhadra (Chn. Puxian)." But what I thought I heard was "Shaman." I previously researched the comparative study of religions, and I knew that shamanism is a kind of religion that believes in witchcraft. So I objected. The old man on the phone continued, "Our place is different from other places. Today we're commemorating the patriarch Samantabhadra's passing. It's a rare



Suffering
must
be
reversed

是
苦
當
歸



occasion. He'll give a Dharma talk. We're busy. So if you want to come, come quickly." After I hung up the phone, the elderly man asked me, "Do you want to go? My whole family will be going." I replied, "Then I'll go, too." I was out the door even before they started off.

The group of people that originally followed me had also caught up, and came along with us. After walking for a while we saw a big pool in which to free captive fish. The pool was transparent, big and clear, just like a fish tank in an aquarium. We saw how the fish in the pool killed each other. Big fish chased after small fish. Some of the small fish were eaten and some died after running into each other. Many of the people who came along with me asked, "Look, Master, the captive fish that many of us set free are either being eaten or dying from colliding with other fish. Do we still have to set captive animals free?" I thought—these fish are so foolish. What a pity! People set them free, yet they still try to kill one another. But I still said firmly, "Though they eat each other and run into each other, we still have to set them free." Hearing what I said, they were satisfied and continued to go forward.

The people who came along with me included monastics and lay people, male and female. When I lost a shoe as I was walking, someone would pick it up and bring it back for me to put on. As we kept going upward along the mountain road we found the surroundings very quiet and refreshing, and permeated with a delicate fragrance. As we entered the main entrance of a monastery, the lay people who came with me all disappeared. Only the monastics remained. Then a monk dressed just about like me, but who looked neither Chinese nor

Japanese, strode up beside me and we walked on side by side. After we passed through the entrance, there were two very tall partition screens carved from something that looked like coral or purple jade. The floor in between them was paved with smooth, glossy material that looked like jade or slate. The wall-like screens on both sides contained words, like some naturalistic incantations that seemed to be in Tibetan or Sanskrit. My first impression was that it looked like the calligraphic style that Nichiren Shonin of the Japanese Nichiren School adopted to write the seven characters *nam-myoh-renge-kyo* (南無妙法蓮華經) (Homage to the Lotus Sutra), like the writing style used for magic Daoist talismans.

ANYWAY, A DREAM
IS A DREAM;
THERE'S NO
REAL MEANING.
I JUST
HAD A DREAM,
THAT'S ALL.

How strange! How did I end up in a place reminiscent of the Nichiren School? So I said to my monastic disciples, "Perhaps this is a branch monastery of the Nichiren School?" Then I asked the monk who walked inside with me, "Are you an adherent of the Nichiren School?" He said, "No, I'm from the Chan School." He spoke Chinese. After saying that, he said nothing else to me.

As we walked another stretch of road, climbing higher the whole time, the screens became increasingly taller, bigger, and more imposing, and the road also became broader and broader. Finally, at a turn in the road, a monastic about 40 or 50 years old came forward and greeted us. He said, "Turn left now. The patriarch 'shaman' (Samantabhadra) is already giving the Dharma talk. Quick—go in!"

As soon as I turned left, the scene suddenly changed on a grand scale, not the kind where there were many people, but a very open and spacious

area. A vast expanse on the left side was completely empty, clean and luminous. As soon as I saw it, I felt as if I had entered the gate of liberation.

Then I looked at the center and saw an enormous three-legged ritual vessel that reached up to the sky. It seemed to be carved from a large, blue-green emerald. The vessel was topped with a peaked, circular canopy of jewels. In front of the canopy there was an extremely large, square, embossed screen, on which I first saw four large gold Chinese characters. The three-dimensional characters floating on top glowed with golden light on a surface also radiated a red like agate, both colors being transparent. The four characters read, "Suffering must be reversed." (是苦當歸)

I walked toward the vessel and when I was almost right below it, I saw that on each side of "Suffering must be reversed" was a line of small characters that suddenly manifested. The line at the right read, "To know all suffering is [to know] that everything is empty." (知一切苦一切是空). Then the line to the left appeared, "To be empty is not to suffer; to suffer is to be not empty." (空則不苦苦則不空)

The two lines of small characters disappeared after I had seen them, leaving only the four big characters. At that moment, the monk who claimed to be a Chan adherent said, "Take a look to the right. That is the realm of quiescent extinction (Chn. *jimie*; another name for "nirvaṇa."). Having entered it, you'll find yourself in the state of quiescent extinction." I saw a huge main entrance that I hadn't seen before, towering and awe inspiring. When I looked upward, it seemed to continue upward without end. Its two sides stretched all the way downward, seeming to have no limit. A flight of milk-white, jade stairs led to the main entrance which seemed to be both right before my eyes, and yet far away. Viewed from afar, the main entrance wasn't

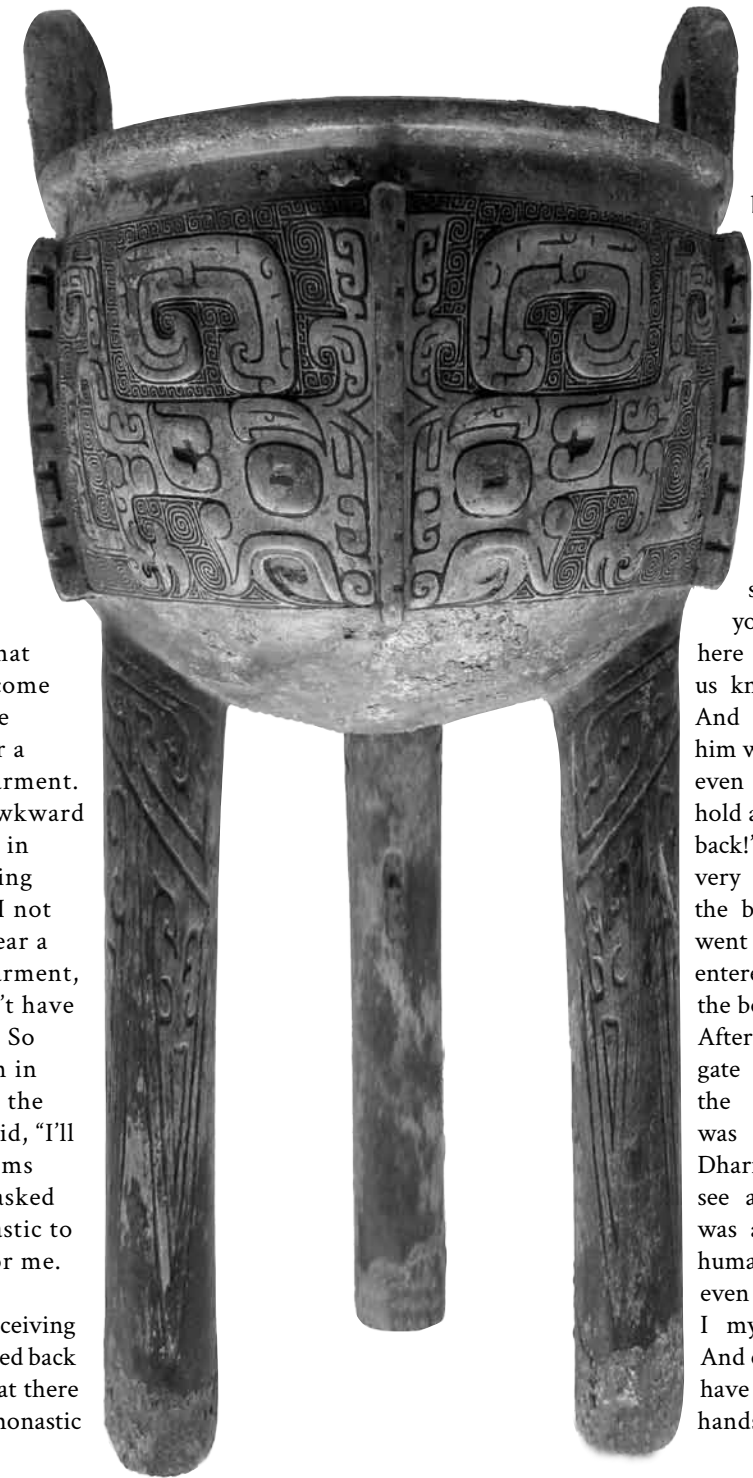
human-made or painted, but naturally formed by green hills and blue streams. A huge plaque inscribed with the four characters "Entering the Realm of Quiescent Extinction" (入寂滅境) was fitted above the main entrance, which was closed.

Later I saw several characters under the embossed screen on the vessel that read: "Dharma talks by Puxian Bodhisattva at his passing." (普賢菩薩示寂開示) I thought, "Since Puxian Bodhisattva has already passed away, why is that he is still giving Dharma talks?" Still in doubt, I walked toward the vessel. After walking past it, I found a staircase that was very hard to climb. I saw several other monastics already present who very easily went up, but I somehow went the wrong way and was blocked by a pillar. I had to go around the pillar, and almost fell down. One monastic came out and said, "You went the wrong way. It's too dangerous! You should come over from that side." I had taken a side path because it looked a bit closer. So I turned back, and approached it again from the correct path.

After entering I saw many monastics coming out, each holding an alms bowl in their hands. The monastic who pointed out the way for me told me, "Mealtime has already begun. You're late! Since you're here already, just come in." So I followed him inside. There were many monastics there, but no one paid attention to me, each walking in their respective row. They were all dressed the same in light gray full-sleeved gowns and dark gray robes; their appearance was pure and detached, simple and down-to-earth. Although there were many monastics, all were silent. Fat or thin, tall or short, young or old, they all wore a smile on their face, as if filled with Dharma joy. The monk who claimed to be an adherent of the Chan tradition had already entered, wearing a ceremonial garment. The monastic that received me said:

"Venerable Master Taixu arrived way before you. He also didn't wear a ceremonial garment (I myself was also only wearing an ordinary robe without any ceremonial garment); but he was quite at ease, and didn't think that he shouldn't come in just because he didn't wear a ceremonial garment. Do you feel awkward about coming in without wearing one?" I said, "I not only didn't wear a ceremonial garment, but I also don't have an alms bowl. So how can I join in the meal with the group?" He said, "I'll give you an alms bowl." So he asked another monastic to find a bowl for me.

After receiving the bowl I looked back and noticed that there was only one monastic



disciple left in my entourage and he had no bowl either. I handed my bowl to him, who turned the bowl over from side to side and just couldn't hold it properly. The monastic that received me scolded me, saying, "Why did you bring someone here without letting us know in advance? And you didn't train him well, so he doesn't even know how to hold a bowl. Send him back!" My disciple was very upset, returned the bowl to me, and went back alone. I entered alone with the bowl in my hands. After entering the gate I tried to find the patriarch who was expounding the Dharma, but I didn't see anyone there. It was a realm without human beings. I didn't even know whether I myself was there. And of course, I didn't have a bowl in my hands.

An inscription suddenly appeared in the vastness of space. Space itself seemed to have a voice that said, "Speak! What are these?" In all my previous knowledge, I had never seen the characters "mallard" or fu (鳧) and "swallow" yi (乙) used in a couplet before, but that's what I uttered aloud.

I uttered, "Fu and yi are both indistinct."

Then a second inscription of these characters appeared, to which I uttered, "Fu can't perceive yi."

Next, the third inscription appeared, and I said, "Fu moves toward yi."

For the fourth inscription I said, "Fu and yi meet."

For the fifth inscription I said, "Fu and yi are in accord."

For the sixth inscription I said, "Fu and yi intermingle and merge."

For the seventh inscription I said, "Fu and yi are naturally unified."

For the eighth inscription I said, "Fu and yi are both forgotten."

For the ninth inscription I said, "Fu and yi cease to be."

At last the tenth inscription appeared, and I said, "The cessation itself also ceases." There seemed to be more after the tenth inscription, but I wasn't allowed to see them.

As soon as the inscriptions would vanish, nothing could be perceived. When I looked up, I didn't see anything. It was a realm spacious and empty, yet rich and full, a realm that existed before time. But my whole being was unusually cool and

refreshed, and extremely quiet. I thought, "Is this the state of quiescent extinction? No, the state of quiescent extinction isn't here. It should be over there. You can't enter the state of quiescent extinction from here; you should enter from there. This place is only the beginning that leads into the state of quiescent extinction." As I glanced over my shoulder, I returned to the human world again, and saw numerous living beings again. And then the dream ended.

When I went inside to listen to the Dharma talk, no one was speaking, and I was just shown several inscriptions. There were no images of a fu or a yi, only abstract patterns and lines. I couldn't tell what they were, but my mouth uttered words. And after I said them, the inscriptions would vanish. That was a very strange dream. So after the dream ended, I remained in the dream physically and mentally, feeling very cool and refreshed. Then when I subsequently did sitting meditation and the morning service, and even now, it seems that I'm still dreaming the dream (it was already ten o'clock that morning) and that state is still with me. Anyway, a dream is a dream; there's no real meaning. I just had a dream, that's all.

There's no real meaning



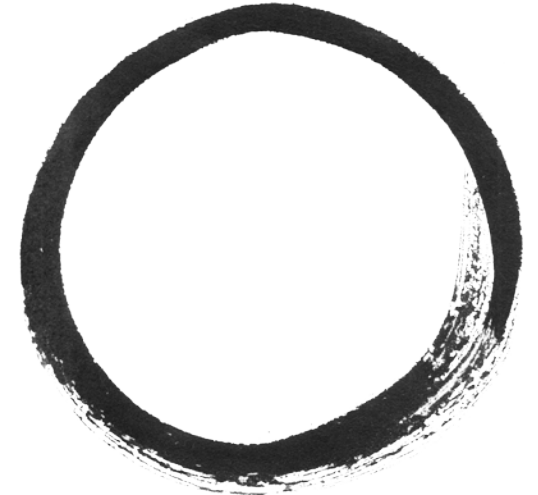
Fu can't perceive Yi



Fu and Yi are in accord



Fu and Yi intermingle and merge



Fu and Yi cease to be

Butterfly Dream

a Daoist text by Zhuang Zhou

Formerly,
I, Zhuang Zhou,
dreamt that I was a butterfly,
a butterfly flying about,
feeling that it was enjoying itself.
I did not know that it was Zhou.

Suddenly I awoke,
and was myself again,
the veritable Zhou.
I did not know
whether it had formerly been
Zhou dreaming that he was a butterfly,
or it was now
a butterfly dreaming that it was Zhou.

But between Zhou and a butterfly
there must be a difference.
This is a case
of what is called
the Transformation of Things.

From *Zhuangzi*, as translated by James Legge (1891)



Painting by Lu Chih (1496-1576)

The Arising of Conditioned Appearance from the True Mind

Part 3

by

Abbot Venerable Guo Xing

This is the third in a series of articles taken from Dharma talks given by Abbot Venerable Guo Xing at the Shurangama Sutra Retreat in August 2012. The talks focus on the first four chapters of the Shurangama Sutra, and include the discussion of Chan theory and practice, stories of the Chan Masters, and how to apply Chan methods in daily life.

The Seeing-Nature Neither Perishes, Nor Returns

The Chinese Chan School's 6th Patriarch asked Huairang (one of his successors) "How did you get here? Where did you come from?" Huairang said he came from Nan Yue. And the 6th Patriarch asked again: "What has driven you here?" Huairang was questioned in this way for three years, until he finally achieved enlightenment. Many renowned Chan masters questioned their disciples like this, asking where they came from and how they got here. Master Mazu Daoyi once even said to someone: "You are very powerful, dragging your body, a weight of seventy-something kilos, every day. You drag it here and there. You are so powerful!" Do you agree that this mind that we have is very powerful? It has been dragging this seventy-kilo body everywhere for tens of years. But what is the thing that is dragging the body? Does such a thing exist? Does it exist at all?

King Prasenajit asked the Buddha to prove that the mind neither arises, nor perishes. The Buddha asked him in reply: "Is your flesh-and-blood body as permanent and immortal as diamond, or will it perish?" From young to old, from birth till death, our bodies have been changing all the time. For each individual person, his fifty-year-old body is different from when he was forty years old. There is also a difference between the forty-year-old body and the thirty-year-old one, and it is the same for the thirty-year-old body and the twenty-year-old one. Ten-year-old's body, five-year-old's, four-year-old's, three-year-old's, etc. This is not only the difference of 10 years of age. Our bodies are different each year, each month, each day, and even each and every second. However, when we go visit Manhattan's Hudson River, whether we visit it at the age of five or at the age of fifty, has the thing within us that is able to see it changed? No, it has not. Our bodies keep changing, but the pure mind which has the nature of seeing does not.



X-ray by Rikki Asher

We ordinary people cannot die, since ordinary people's deluded mind will not perish. Our mind is very persistent. People say that death ends all of one's troubles and vexations, but it is in fact not that easy. Even if someone says to me that he is going to kill himself, I would not get worried. I will say "You cannot really kill yourself. Because even when your physical body is dead, a new wandering thought will pop up immediately from your deluded mind, and so you will go find another body right away."

Do you know who can truly die? There is such a story in the sutras. A Buddhist practitioner, Vangisa, had profound power. When he held a skeleton's head, as long as he knocked at it, he then could know where this person went after death, whether this person rose to heaven or was reborn as a human. Once the Buddha brought Jivaka a head of a skeleton, however, no matter how hard he knocked at it, he could not know where this person's soul went. Jivaka was quite surprised. The Buddha told him "This is an arhat. He is not to be reborn." This arhat's deluded mind has perished, but what about his true mind? We generally call this phenomenon "an arhat entering Nirvana." This true mind is in fact the Nirvana Mind, the mind that does not arise or perish. It is also the seeing-nature that we are talking about here. The true mind is the pure mind that has awareness.

The fundamental pure mind is not coming or going. Human bodies are born and die, and our thoughts also get reincarnated. This running around is just in the cycle of birth and death. The true mind that we are talking about is motionless, but it has awareness. This is like the ocean and its waves. After the waves stop surging, is the ocean still there? It is. Though sentient beings' minds function with duality, the true mind is always in non-duality. Therefore we say, true mind, the seeing-nature, or the pure mind that is able to see, hear, understand and that has awareness, can never be lost.

The Buddha continued: "As you now see me, the essence of your seeing is not the fundamental pure mind itself, yet it is the reflection of the pure mind's true functions." Through our eyes, when the sun rises, we see brightness; if there is no moon light at night or the sky is covered by dark clouds, then we see darkness. When there are doors and windows in the wall, we can see the outside from the inside of a room; if not, then our vision is blocked. There are all kinds of perceptions of distinctions, when we see different causal conditions; when there is nothing there, then we see the void. When there is dust all over in the air, we see turbidity; when the sun shines after rain, we see clear brightness. Among these eight phenomena, brightness originates from the sun, so it returns to the sun; darkness originates from the night, therefore it returns to the night; penetration originates from the openness of the doors and windows, then it returns to the doors and windows; obstruction originates from the walls and eaves, so it returns to the walls and eaves; the existence of distinctions is because of causal conditions, therefore they return to causal conditions. Nothingness is due to the void, then it returns to the void; turbidity is because of the dust, so it returns to the dust; clear brightness results from cloudless skies, so it returns to cloudless skies. All of these have been returned, however, the mind that sees can be returned to whom? Where can the true mind that has the seeing-nature return? There is actually no place that it can return to."

I want to ask you the following questions: Is the void inside the mind, or is the mind inside the void? If the void is inside the mind, then where is the mind? Since the deluded mind is not separate from the true mind, then when all causal conditions are removed, where is the true mind?

THAT WHICH
CAN BE RETURNED
NOWHERE
IS NONE OTHER
THAN YOU.

The second group of questions: Your mind and mine, are they separate? Have you ever heard of "one heart according with another"? You are over there and I am here, so if we both achieve non-abiding mind, does that mean the two non-abiding minds correspond to each other from two different positions? Are you thinking in this way?

In the Morning Services we often chant: "Those suffering from the eight woes and the three paths below, may they enter, one and all, Vairocana's nature sea." Our mind is like a drop of water entering the sea of Vairocana Buddha's nature, his Dharmakaya. Then is each one of us like a drop of water taken out from this sea of Vairocana? Or are we at this moment actually in this "sea"? Are we now separate from the "sea," then will go back into it later, or we are the "sea" from the beginning?

Therefore in the Shurangama Sutra the Buddha says "That which can be returned nowhere is none other than you. Therefore I know that your mind is fundamentally wonderful, bright, and pure. You yourself are confused and deluded. You miss what is fundamental, and you are caught in the turning wheel of the six paths, tossing and floating on the stormy sea of birth and death all the time. No wonder the Thus Come One says that you are the most pitiable of creatures."

Our mind can reflect all of the various phenomena; however, it does not belong to any phenomenon. Here the Buddha is explaining this characteristic of the fundamental pure mind, which is that it can be returned nowhere.

(To be continued)

Training Story

by
Guo Gu

Guo Gu (Jimmy Yu) is an assistant professor at Florida State University, and the guiding teacher of the DDMBA's newest chapter in Tallahassee, Florida. This Dharma talk is a commentary on Case 12 of the Gateless Barrier. It was given at the Tallahassee Chan Center April 11, 2011.

There was a great Chan master, Gaofeng Yuanmiao (1238-1295) in the Yuan Dynasty who had a very solid practice prior to his awakening. He had always followed the precepts and was mindful day and night. He was also keen on the Tiantai doctrine. Later he went to study with Chan Master Xueyan Zuqin 1210-1287).

Practicing under Xueyan, he realized an initial enlightenment at age twenty-five. Though the insight was not thorough, he was able to respond to questions like lightening. One day Xueyan poked at him, "Are you able to be your own master?"

Gaofeng replied confidently, "Yes." Xueyan said, "Oh, your own master, huh?!" and asked, "How about in sleep? Are you able to be the master when you sleep?"

Gaofeng said, "Yes!" The master laughed, "Wonderful! But what about when sleeping there is no dream, no perceptions, when the master is absent, where does he establish himself?"

That left Gaofeng dumbfounded and he could not respond. Xueyan said, "From now on, I don't want you to learn the Buddhadharma nor study the ancients. When hungry, eat. When tired, sleep. After you're rested, pick up your spirit and find out

who the hell is awake from the sleep? Where is this master's resting place?"

Master Xueyan Zuqin had given him a present! For the next five years Gaofeng did just this. One night while laying down to sleep, his roommate's pillow dropped to the ground. Pillows in those pre-modern Chan monasteries were not like our



Burrowing Owl by Myosen Julie Sprott

modern cotton pillows but were hard, made of bound bamboo sticks. The pillow made a crisp sound when it hit the floor. “Kaal!” As soon as Gaofeng heard it, he became completely enlightened. You can try throwing your pillow down and see if that will help you reach enlightenment. [laughter] It won’t work. You have to go through decades of practice. Gaofeng eventually became a Chan master. His example is worth emulating.

As a practitioner, Gaofeng’s actions were impeccable. He observed the precepts perfectly; understood the doctrines; followed his teacher’s advice without error. Nowadays people just want to take shortcuts. They are unwilling to observe precepts, thinking that’s for ordinary people or is an attachment. Yet, if we cannot even be the master of our actions during the day, how are we going to be our own master at night? Isn’t it true that many of our problems come from our relations with others? Our actions affect others in visible and invisible ways. If we harm others, isn’t it worthwhile to be mindful of our actions? If our

actions aren’t pure, how can we actualize the purity of our mind? I suggest that you all take up Gaofeng Yuanmiao as an exemplar—be a master of yourself first during the day. Then perhaps even at night your mind will be clear, free from delusion. When opportunities for intense seven-day retreats come, sign up! There, you’ll have nothing to do, except use the method. You can sit all day long and just chew on the question, “Who’s the master?” If you’re hungry, a meal is ready for you. If you need to go to the bathroom, it’s right there. During the day between sittings, you can go to the bathroom all you want. If you want an interview when you’re bored and want to talk to someone, the teacher is there to talk to you. If you fall asleep during sitting, someone will come around with a stick and help wake you up! [laughter] Everything is set for you. There is nothing for you to do except keep asking one question that you don’t know the answer to. Question, question, question, question.

How do we be our own masters in daily life? In daily life, do what is called for—don’t inject your self-

referential opinions into your daily affairs. When vexations arise, raise your question: “Who’s the master?” If you see a pretty girl or a handsome man, and you discover that you’ve lost your composure, ask, “Who is the master now?” [laughter] Or, if someone challenges you, accuses you, doesn’t listen to you, ask “Who’s the master?” The person who challenges you may have just woken up on the wrong side of the bed and may just want to vent. Don’t buy into other people’s dreams. If you buy into these, it’s like someone hitting you with a stick and you take the stick and start hitting yourself. Not only has the person already presented you with a challenge, but now by having vexations such as anger adding fuel to the fire, you make the problem worse.

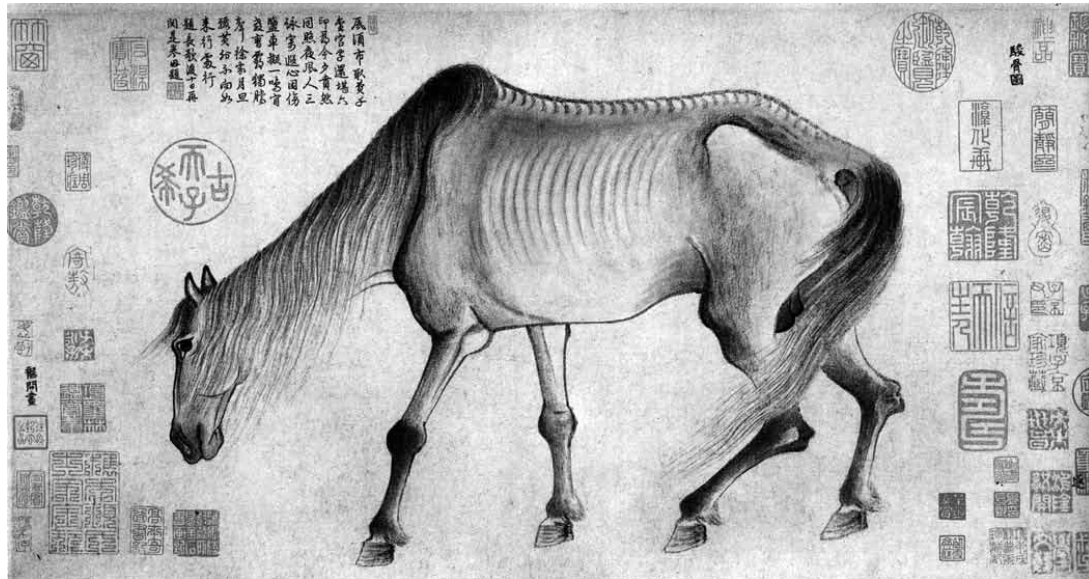
This is like someone holding a stick and hitting you. Of course you don’t get angry at the stick, but get angry at the person. Yet, this person is obviously under the influence of vexations so you need not get angry at this person; if you want to be angry, you can be angry at the culprit—the vexations that are holding this person. Have compassion for the person; like you, he’s beholden by vexations. We all need to be our own master under all circumstances, in public and in private, day and night.

How do we be our own masters at night? Not only shouldn’t you buy into others’ dreams, don’t buy into your own dreams. Don’t paint a tiger and then become afraid of it! Yet, how often do we become fearful of our own imaginations? How often do we dream up ideals and notions and see the world through them? How often do these fabrications come true? Haven’t we learned that things don’t ever turn out the way we want them to be? Haven’t we learned that our own suffering comes from wanting things to go our way? The

point is not to get rid of concepts and intellect. But we must not be slaves to them, and if we discover that we are enslaved, ask, “Who’s the master?” Dreams are indeed enticing. They reveal many things. After the dream, if there’s something we learn from it, fine. If not, drop it. Otherwise, dreaming while living in the dream of samsara is not so helpful. Chan master Gaofeng, prior to full enlightenment, was able to have clarity even in sleep. He could control his sleep even to the point of having no dreams. This may be unthinkable for some, but it is actually not so difficult to do. Seasoned practitioners who have samadhi power can purify their discriminating consciousness to such an extent that even in sleep their presence of concentration and clarity continue. Even in dreams, when they do have them, they don’t break precepts. That is, if they’re about to break precepts, they can stop themselves in the dream.

Dreams are a continuation of waking life. Awake or asleep, vexations continue. For this reason, our practice must continue. How? First do not get so caught up with dreams. Neither exalt nor fear them. Second, when it’s time to sleep, just sleep. If the correct view of neither grasping nor rejecting become deeply ingrained in you, when dreams emerge while you sleep you will recognize them for what they are and put them down. Third, when you realize that this whole world is a dream and the dreamer, too, is unreal, continue your practice! Not for the sake of yourself; not for the sake of others; not for the sake of Buddhahood or saving all beings. Practice just to practice. You will realize that the holy realm of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas is none other than your own hometown, and the quiescent nirvana is, itself, a dream.

DREAMS ARE
A CONTINUATION
OF WAKING LIFE.
AWAKE OR ASLEEP,
VEXATIONS
CONTINUE.



Emaciated Horse by Gong Kai (1222–1307)

My Mother's Last Gift

by
Xueshan

In 2001, my elderly father took ill. Almost 94 years old, he was certainly dying. Fortunately, we could keep him at home, where my mother, my sister, and I cared for him. He died without much pain after two months. Eight days later, unexpectedly, my mother died.

I had no dreams about my parents for most of the next year; I took this as a sign that they were relatively at peace, or at least, I was. One day, I took an afternoon nap on the couch. I dreamt about going through her things, feeling vaguely guilty about it.

“What are you doing?” she asked me? I was astonished to see her quite alive, wearing her favorite dress, all large red flowers on a bright blue background. It was one of the items I had already sent to poor relatives in Belarus.

“Ma, I thought you were dead, so I was sorting your clothes.”

“How could you think that?”

“I must have dreamt it.”

She laughed, “So. Now you wish I was dead, you dream about it?” She always was a master of sarcasm.

“Of course not! But it was so realistic! Papa’s dying, the funeral, the burial, taking you to the hospital in the ambulance, holding your warm,

dead hand ... I never have dreams that real!”

She gave me a funny look. With her hands on her hips, she asked, “How can you know you’re not dreaming now?”

“Because there’s a difference in feeling between dreams and waking.” I looked around. Everything was there and vibrant with reality . . . the kitchen, the chairs, the TV on in the other room, the sun shining through the venetian blinds at a slant, the breeze blowing through the window raised ten inches and moving the gauze curtains slightly, the grain of the blond wood table, and, most especially, my mother herself, in her blue and red dress, every wrinkle plain on her smiling face, blue eyes dancing in transcendent merriment . . . so I said, “Ma, in meditation there’s a coming back to being aware of being aware that’s the essence of wakefulness, and I can feel that now. How could I feel that in a dream? I can say definitely, I am not dreaming now! And I am so glad you are still alive! “

Fortunately, I did not remember this dream for hours after I woke, so that I felt no grief of accepting death again. But the strangeness of the dream dumbfounded me when I remembered it. Only later, when washing some dishes, did it come to me all at once. I uttered a loud expletive as I realized one of my basic assumptions had been totally shattered, forever.



Retreat Report

by

Mimi Yu

Two days after I returned home from volunteering for the retreat, I had a dream of Shifu (Chan Master Sheng Yen). He appeared as if he were alive. Though I had never spoken with him, he talked in Chinese as if we had known each other.

“Who has been teaching you the ways of the Dharma?” Shifu asked.

I bowed and replied, “Shifu, I started studying with the teachers at DDRC.” Shifu smiled. Then he pointed behind me and said that he knew of two places that are accepting disciples, and that I could see if they would take on someone new.

I thanked Shifu for his guidance, and started racing as fast as I could towards where he pointed, hoping to make it at least to the first place. Before I reached anywhere along the seemingly endless

path, Shifu disappeared, and I woke up. Strangely, I could no longer recall the names Shifu so kindly instructed me to remember.

When I first volunteered at DDRC, I foolishly declared that I wished to reach enlightenment in this lifetime, to which Chang Wen Fashi replied that there are many lifetimes to work towards enlightenment. I was puzzled by the response, because I was eager to learn, practice, and read everything I could about Chan Buddhism. That all suffering connected to this body, this life and this world would cease to exist if enlightenment were reached, had been my primary motive for studying. I kept thinking if I were just given seven days, ten days, twenty days of practice, if I were able to lead a monastic existence, for sure I could be enlightened then.

My delusion of entering the state of enlightenment was shattered during one of the evening dharma talks on this retreat, when the teacher told a story about an American champion dog. The dog had been a winner, but during one race he suddenly realized that it was futile to chase the hare, to run in circles all of his life—so the dog stopped running. To the shock of everyone who put money on the champion dog, he lost.

We are all champion dogs in some ways. Most of us are taught since birth to win. Life is a race

to be the best, the most extraordinary, the most gifted. Myself, I needed to receive first prizes in competitions, play major concerts, get into top schools, feel superior to others, make my family proud, secure the most prestigious jobs. These goals amount to not only the meaning but the prerequisite of a worthwhile, albeit miserable, existence. For all attainments and ideas of success bring dukkha (suffering)—it arises of thirst, and cannot cease until the possession of wisdom.

Buddhism made me see how fruitless my previous struggles had been. But in wanting to realize the ultimate truth taught by the Buddha, I fell into another trap; I judged others by their practice demeanor, I became impatient during Dharma discussion if I did not deem the student comments “lucid”, I sought the perfect teacher and the most effective method, forgetting that any teacher and method has something to offer. In fact, in craving enlightenment and looking for an end to physical and mental suffering, I had become just another champion dog running for a different race, chasing a different hare, and trying to win on a different track.

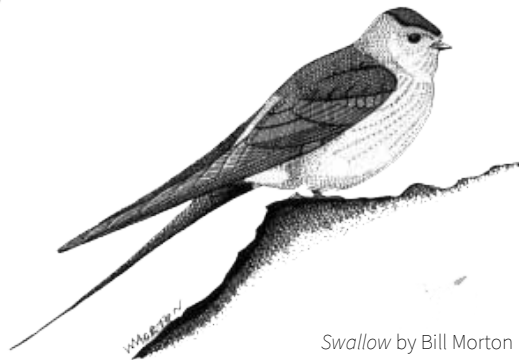
The retreat made me observe my illusion up close. Desiring enlightenment is unrealistic; not in the sense that enlightenment is unachievable, but in the sense that it is absolutely unnecessary to achieve. If I could live mindfully, if I could walk mindfully, if I could breathe and chant and sleep mindfully, if I could concentrate my mind and remain aware of each and every single moment, if my thoughts could arise and self-destruct—then what do I crave enlightenment for?

As soon as I saw that, I felt briefly liberated from my own habit energies of winning and achieving. I continue to feel deep gratitude and immense confidence in the teaching of Shifu, DDRC, and in Buddhadharma. But whether I reach enlightenment

this retreat, next retreat, this lifetime, or many life times away, I no longer care as much. All methods, people and places that we try to hold onto dearly, such as teachers, temples, Chan Buddhism, self or atman, are subject to impermanence. No matter how hard we try to attach ourselves to the idea of enlightenment and the teachings of Dharma, we eventually will have to let go of it.

In the end, there is really no “me” to realize enlightenment, is there? Buddha said, “Within this fathom-long sentient body itself, I postulate the world, the arising of the world, the cessation of the world, and the path leading to the cessation of the world.” But “I” am nothing, nothing but the five aggregates, wherein all the Four Noble Truths can be found. For realization realizes itself; and enlightenment enlightens itself, as soon as the mind clears.

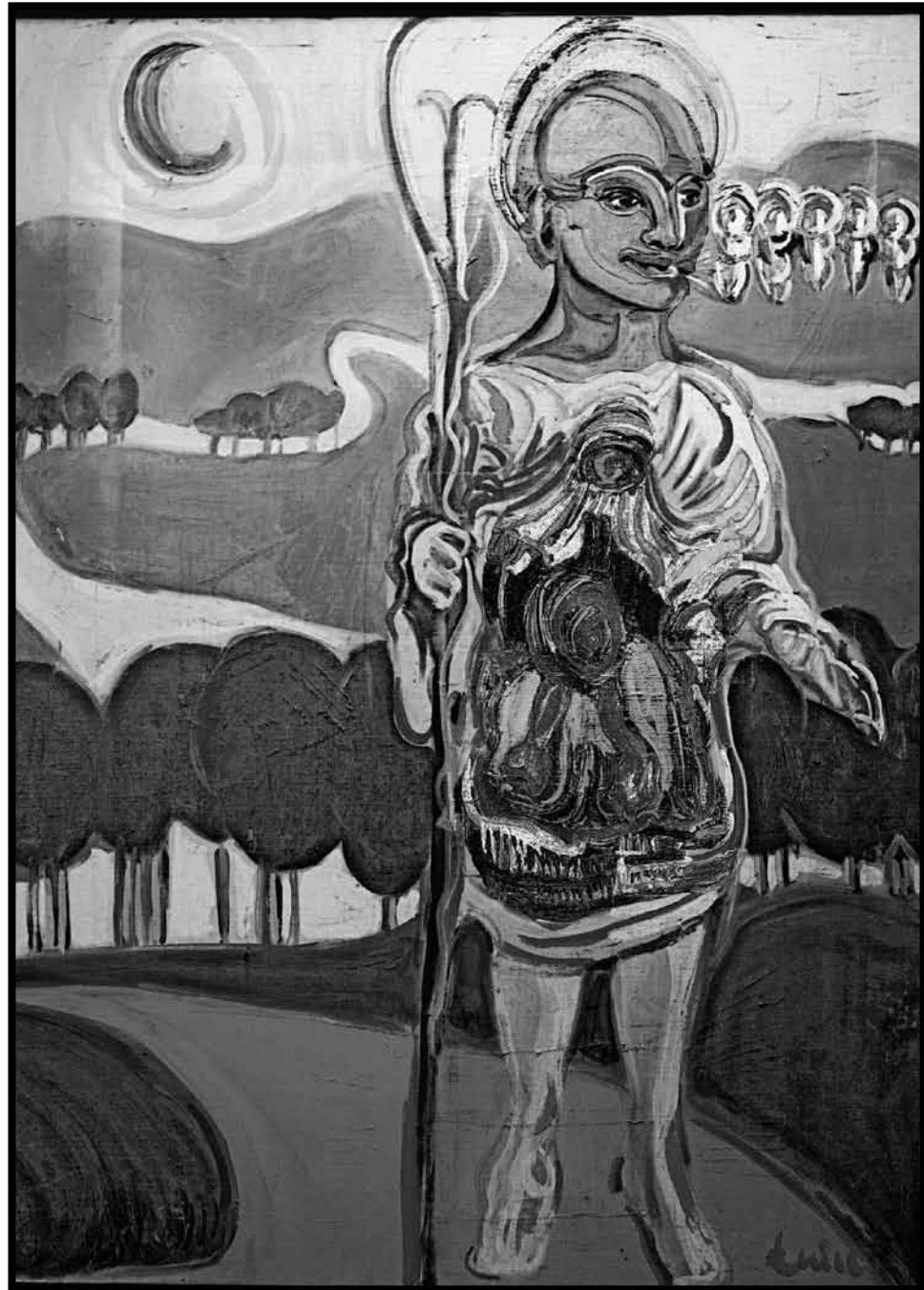
In this present moment, I may appear to be going forward, like a slow-moving race dog, destined to lose. But maybe some day, I will again come across those nameless monasteries that Shifu once tried to show me, in the now distant dreams.



Swallow by Bill Morton



Mallard by Don McQueen



Buddhas on Every Breath by Tim Jundo Williams

The Contractor

by

Harry Miller

At the moment of enlightenment the Buddha declared, "O house-builder, you are seen! You will not build this house again. For your rafters are broken and your ridgepole shattered. My mind has reached the Unconditioned; I have attained the destruction of craving."

I heard about this event and went to see the Buddha. I told him that I was sorry that he lost his house and indicated that there were various programs for relief assistance to people who have suffered disasters. The Buddha gave me a kindly look and said, "On the contrary, everything is good, as matter of fact, never better."

I tend to be very literal-minded, so I pressed further, saying, "That must have been pretty traumatic when the rafters came down on your head."

The Buddha said, "To convey the teachings, I often speak in metaphors. The house itself, represents the illusion of individualized existence in the cycle of birth and rebirth. The ridge-pole is ignorance, and the house builder, representing craving and aversion, is none other than Mara himself."

I am often impressed by famous people and name-dropping, so when the Buddha mentioned Mara, I thought, "Wow, there can be no better contractor for the renovations that I've been planning on my apartment."

The Buddha said "No, these rafters that I have destroyed are desires, great obstructions to those who pursue them."

I reeled off some of the great architectural wonders of our time; the Taj Mahal, the Louvre, Angkor Wat. The Buddha claimed that I was missing the point. "Sense desires," he said, "bring little enjoyment and much suffering and disappointment. The perils in them are greater. Sense desires are like bare bones; they are like a lump of flesh, like a torch of straw, like a pit of burning coals, like a dream, like borrowed goods, like a fruit-bearing tree, like a slaughterhouse, like a stake of swords, like a snake's head, such are sense desires."

This was pretty difficult to follow. I caught some of the motifs the Buddha talked about. They seemed to be a little Gothic, sort of a Southwestern theme, a little Georgia O'Keefe-ish, with the snakes and the bones and the swords. My tastes run more towards French Provincial or Italian Rococo. I said, "if you had stayed on top of the contractor who built that house, maybe all this wouldn't have happened in the first place."

I considered thoughtfully: that must have been quite a house that took complete enlightenment to destroy. Who could have built something like that, and how reasonable are his rates? The Buddha spoke some more, I think I only listened with one ear, because when he started talking about this great

mansion that he had destroyed, all I could think about were the things that I wanted built: a new deck, swimming pool, built-in book shelves, maybe even a billiard room. I was practically salivating with the visions of how my new home would look. The Buddha did not look too enthusiastic about my plans. “Where can I find this guy?” I asked. The Buddha did not reply. All I heard him say was something about “foolish man,” but I’m sure he was talking to those disciples of his who follow him around all the time.

That settled it. I had to find Mara, tell him what I wanted, and start negotiating. A quick Internet search under “Delusions” yielded multiple locations where he was doing business. He has more locations than Starbucks! So it was no surprise when I found one of his store fronts right in the huge mall in my town: Mara’s Interior and Exterior Fabrications, Inc. I entered the showroom and I was instantly impressed. Beautiful glass and chrome everywhere. There was a little tarnish on the chrome reflections, but I know how busy Mara must be. There was a tremendous amount of activity in his office. A lot of people running around seeking this or that. The beautiful Persian carpets muffled most but not all of the noise.

Mara sat behind a huge walnut desk cluttered with his personal effects. There were pictures everywhere — a little Baroque if you ask me — gods, men, devils, all sorts of creatures, and many ornate statues made out of the seven precious treasures. He was wearing the latest designer suit, manicured, tanned, with a rather military buzz cut. He swiveled around, stood up, and greeted me as soon as I walked in. He gave me a big smile, and asked, almost humbly, “How can I be of service?”

I showed him my blueprints and told him about some of my loftier dreams for my own little “palace.”

“Perfect,” he said, “We can do all of this for you in a timely manner and under budget.”

“How much?” I asked, but he quickly changed the subject and showed me some beautiful, glossy brochures of his best work. It literally spanned the universe. I hesitated. “I think I’m going to need some references.”

Mara said, “No problem. You can look through all the Sutras and see more references than you can shake a stick at. Sometimes I’m cited by name, but sometimes by one of my monikers, like ‘The Three Ingredients.’”

“Don’t you mean Poisons?” I volunteered.

“Look,” he said, drawing close to my face. “There are always problems with the translations. They get it all wrong. As a matter of fact, I was the one who actually wrote the Sutras. I taught the Buddha everything he knows. I just take a back seat because of my great humility.”

That was very touching, but I was still uncertain. “What about those references to ‘The Evil One’ that are scattered throughout the Tripitaka?”

He said, “Oh, that’s just my screen name for things like AOL, Match.com, and my bank accounts. It’s part of being cool and it’s very good for business. All my customers are very satisfied. That’s why they keep coming back again and again and again. Repeat business is the key to success. You can’t argue with success. I sell real dreams. We build you a better past and that means a better present and, you know what that means: a better future!”

“What about all the pervasive suffering — old age, sickness, and death? Do we just ignore these things?”

“That’s the ticket!” he said brightening. “Ignorance — definitely undervalued. It will serve you in every situation.”

“What about the suffering?”

Mara said, “I have an app for that. I’ll give you the URL. Let’s get real. All sentient beings want to get and keep what is pleasant, and to avoid pain and keep it away, right?”

I wasn’t sure where he was going with this, but I said, “Yes, that seems right.”

Glad that I was getting on board, Mara continued: “That is right. It’s the only thing. People just give up too easily. If they craved a little more and made real, sincere effort to avoid what they don’t like, then their problems would dissolve like candy cotton in the sun.”

“Doesn’t cotton candy just get very sticky in the sun?”

“Don’t be too literal. The idea is to follow your desires until they lead to happiness. Don’t investigate a gift horse. Just take my teachings and run with them. You’ll thank me.

Let’s take a tour,” Mara said. We got into his Rolls Royce, a stunning automobile except for the low but incessant “squeak, squeak, squeak” coming from one of the rear wheels. Mara said, “I don’t hear a thing.” A short drive and we entered Samsara Estates with the beautiful Eighteen Realm Golf Course. Emblazoned on the entrance gate were the words “An Eternal Feast for the Senses.”

We got out and walked around. It seemed like a brand new development. Enormous mansions with towering columns and wide boulevards. I went over to touch one of the columns to see what kind

of materials Mara used, but he was kind enough to tell me that they had just been painted, so I really shouldn’t touch them.

“This is a gated community, very exclusive.” Mara told me, “We only allow people of your caliber and discriminating taste. Other sentient beings don’t have a chance.”

I like feeling special and this reinforced my confidence. We went into the club house with the pool, massage room, Jacuzzis, soft music, and a spectacular the bar and grill. We pulled up some designer chairs and got down to business. The contract had a heading that said “What You Want, Not What You Don’t Want.” After that it was a little hard to read.

Mara, good salesman that he is, pressed on: “We are a full-service organization. Full service through eternity. Stick with me and my company and it doesn’t matter if you end up a dung beetle or a god, I’ve got your back. Even if you end up in one of my hells (which are vastly underrated), you’re still covered. You still get the FREE spa that you see here with all the amenities. This can be quite a relief if your body is getting pierced by molten iron swords and spears all day long. You can’t imagine how nice a rubdown and little shiatsu feel so you can bounce back for the next day.”

I couldn’t contain my excitement about the “FREE” part. My mind, such as it is, was made up. “When do we start?” I asked.

Mara said, “Start? Why you’ve been a customer since beginningless time. I’ve always been there for you. It’s just that every once in a while, I’m sorry to say, people start to lose faith in me, and I find that it’s very helpful if we can clarify things and renew our contract so that everybody’s confidence is restored.” Beginningless time? That’s quite a while.

I thought that this Mara was going to be the new kid on the block, so to speak. That there would be a fresh perspective — a real change. Mara overheard me and said, “Don’t pay attention to change.”

But I needed to go over this a little further. The Buddha did seem pretty peaceful and even happy. But why did he get rid of all the comforts of home until he was practically abiding nowhere? Mara looked like he had it made. He seemed to have all the things that I had always wanted. I thought that I had left the Buddha behind but I definitely heard someone say, “Why don’t you examine all that, think it through, and take a second look?”

I looked back at Mara. He was waiting attentively — a little anxiously if you ask me — for the go ahead. When you really look at him, he’s not quite as imposing as he first seems. I said to Mara, “You know, I really like you.” For some reason, he looked a little shocked. “I mean it. You work so hard trying to help us sentient beings, and what kind of thanks do you get? Who really cares about you?” Mara looked a little sheepish. “You know you’re right!”

“Of course! Eon after eon you run yourself ragged trying to do good and you never get a moment to breathe or reflect.” I had my handy pocket mirror. I took it out and turned it so Mara could see himself. “Look at the wrinkles under your eyes, your shallow breathing, your slumped shoulders. What’s going to become of you if you keep on like this?”

Mara looked almost pathetic: “I’m...not sure.”

“Well, I am, and it’s not good. I want you to be happy. You owe it to yourself to take some time off. You do believe in a permanent, separate, unchanging, concrete self, right? That’s what you’re all about.” Mara nodded.

“That self which is so very important needs to be reinvigorated, needs a little time to itself. What you need is a vacation.”

Mara said, “Nobody has ever really cared about me like this or showed real concern.”

I said, “I really care — you’ve been there for me throughout eternity, I want to return the favor. If you take off a couple of kalpas, who’s going to know?”

I showed him some nice brochures. “Hawaii, Paris, a beautiful resort way on the top of Mount Sumeru. Dancing, night life, music. You don’t have to worry about your business here or anywhere. You’ve got all sentient beings to cover for you — for the moment anyway.”

Mara asked, “When do you think I can go?”

“There’s no time like the present moment.”

“I don’t usually like to listen to that kind of talk, but you have a point. Maybe Mount Sumeru,” Mara said. “I can keep an eye on everything from up there.”

I cautioned him, “They don’t allow cell phones, PCs, Macs — anything like that. Just leave — empty your mind and relax.”

I didn’t have to look far to tell the Buddha what had happened. Even with his house destroyed, he seemed to be doing alright.

Mara sends postcards from time to time. Sometimes I write back and sometimes I don’t. I’ll have to work on that.

The Past

News from CMC, DDRC and DDMBA Worldwide

Passing on the Lamp

1-Day Retreat in Memory of Shifu

It has been five years since Master Sheng Yen (Shifu)’s physical body left us. Everyone misses Shifu dearly. But we all know Shifu has never left us. His quick wit, great teachings and examples of wisdom and compassion have been and will always be in everyone’s heart and will be passed on to the next generation. On Saturday, February 8, 2014, Shifu’s old disciples and new comers,

around 40 people in all, gathered together at the Chan Meditation Center to hold a commemorative Passing on the Lamp Ceremony in memory of Shifu. The day started with a one-day Chan Retreat led by our Abbot Venerable Guo Xing. The retreat consisted of sitting as well as walking meditation, yoga, and two wonderful video clips of Shifu giving Dharma talks at a Silent Illumination



Photo by Ting-Hsin Wang

retreat. In the talks, Shifu eloquently explained the concept and the method of Silent Illumination. After each of Shifu's videos, Venerable Guo Xing further expounded the nature of the mind and gave the attendees more detailed instructions on how to relax the body and mind and how to use the method effectively. Near the end of the retreat, Venerable Guo Xing also briefly introduced the Huatou method and explained the differences and similarities between the two methods.

The day's activities concluded with the assembly reciting bodhisattva vows, and performing the Passing of the Lamp Ceremony, in which Venerable Guo Xing lit Venerable Guo Shu's and Venerable Chang Yu's candles. Then

each participant held a candle and walked up to either Venerable Guo Shu or Venerable Chang Yu to have his or her candle kindled. Each person made an offering of the lit candle at the Buddha Shrine and then returned to his or her seat and made a personal vow on this special day.

May the brightness of the lamp of wisdom guide us find the brightness of our own Buddha nature!

by Min Shi



Photo by Ting-Hsin Wang

The Compassionate Samadhi Water Repentance Dharma Assembly

On the weekend of Jan 31, 2014, Chan Meditation Center held a two-day Compassionate Samadhi Water Repentance Dharma Ceremony followed by a celebration of the lunar New Year. The ceremony, led by the Abbot Venerable Guo Xing and monastics, was comprised of chanting, reciting texts of repentance, and bowing and prostrations to Buddhas.

Venerable Guo Xing gave dharma talks on the historical context of the text, and the proper attitude one should have during and after the ceremony. He explained that the more we repent, the more we will experience happiness and create the conditions for attaining enlightenment, and emphasized the importance of improving our use of body, speech and mind for ourselves and others after the repentance.

Venerable Guo Xing used Master Sheng Yen's six-year solitary retreat in Taiwan as an example to illustrate the importance of repentance. During the first six months of his retreat, Master Sheng Yen focused only on repentance to purify his numerous karmic obstructions from countless lifetimes, and continued repentance practice for the next couple of years while studying sutras.

During the ceremony, people made flower offerings of potted orchids, symbolizing respect to the Buddha and the teachings.

by Ting-Hsin Wang



Rearing Horse by Mokuchu Urushibara (1888-1953)

The Year of the Horse

On Sunday, February 2, 2014 there was a series of celebration activities for the lunar New Year, starting with the chanting of the repentance liturgy, followed by a video greeting from DDM's Abbot President Venerable Guo Dong on the New Year's theme, "Harmony without Disputes." The Abbot President encouraged everyone to face and deal with life events with a calm and quiet attitude. If we find our body and mind in conflict with the environment, we should reflect on the reason why it makes us uncomfortable, and then gradually develop a peaceful state of mind so that we may be able to deal with what's in front of us. Venerable Guo Xing delivered a Dharma talk entitled, "The Year of the Horse: Giddy-Up to Enlightenment!" Venerable encouraged everyone to follow the characteristics of the horse, to have great endurance and calmness, and set a New

Year's Resolution to uncover the potential within our selves. He reminded everyone that we are already enlightened, but that we need to practice in our daily lives, using the analogy from the Chan tradition of holding gold in our hands, but needing to dust it off in order to discover its existence. He also advised the audience to not give rise to the idea of practice, which is the practice of non-practice, and to not attach to memories of the past.

There was a delicious vegetarian lunch and there was a charity bazaar to help raise funds for the expansion of the center. For entertainment there was a lion dance, a solo keyboard performance, a magic show and a performance by the CMC choir. The festivities concluded with a wedding ceremony and blessings to the young couple.

by Ting-Hsin Wang



Photo by Kai Fen Hu

Tallahassee Chan Center Upgraded to DDMBA Chapter

On January 14, 2014, the USA Dharma Drum Mountain Buddhist Association (DDMBA) notified Guo Gu and the Tallahassee Chan Center (TCC) board that TCC's application to be upgraded from a DDMBA branch to a chapter had been approved. This was met with joyful hearts and sincere appreciation for the faith and support that DDM has shown in assisting the Tallahassee branch to become a chapter. The branch was established in 2010 with Guo Gu as the president and resident teacher. TCC has an active five-person board of directors with Fran Berry as president, Will Evans as vice-president, Janette Arispe as treasurer, Dewaine Rester as secretary, and Fred Glock as program coordinator. Guo Gu continues to lead the chapter and provide the Dharma talks and practitioner guidance.

Over the past four years the regular monthly activities have included Monday and Thursday night sittings, monthly day-long and half-day meditation retreats, and weekly Dharma talks after the Monday sittings. On the first Monday of each month the Dharma talk is a commentary on the *Gateless Barrier* gong'an. We hold three day retreats 3-4 times a year. We recently held a three day Memorial Retreat to commemorate Master Sheng Yen's passing, and also held a book giveaway of the new *Tea Words* book by Master Sheng Yen, and showed videos of his talks. With over 600 people on our mailing list, we regularly have 25-50 people attending the weekly meditation sittings, and more for special talks and events. Nearly all of our members are westerners with some international students from the local Florida State University. All of our programs (except some special out-of-town guests' talks) are conducted in English.

Abbott President Venerable Guo Dong and his party visited TCC on November 28-30, 2013 to visit with members, and to give a Dharma talk and the Three Jewels Refuge vows. Around 100 people crowded into the small TCC meditation hall for the evening talk and ceremony, with about 30 people taking vows of Refuge in the Three Jewels. We then celebrated with refreshments and a social reception to allow members to meet Venerable Guo Dong, Venerable Guo Guojian, and the attending monks.

On May 17 to May 28, 2012 Guo Gu led a "Pure Land on Earth Pilgrimage" tour to Dharma Drum Mountain Monastery in Taipei, Taiwan. The pilgrimage was a unique practice opportunity that allowed practitioners from the US to meet and practice with other bodhisattvas from the US, Europe, and Taiwan. It included the first

5-day intensive Chan retreat in English at DDM, commemorating the third year passing of Master Sheng Yen. Twelve people from TCC participated in this trip, accompanied by eighteen people from other States and Australia. We visited other Taipei branches of DDM and other cultural sites in Taipei. This summer, Guo Gu will once again lead a "Pure Land on Earth Pilgrimage" tour to Dharma Drum Mountain Monastery in Taipei, Taiwan for a 7-day intensive Chan retreat in English on July 1-July 10, 2014. Applications are still being accepted. For more information:

Tallahassee.chan@gmail.com

<http://www.tallahasseechan.com>

By Fran Berry, President Tallahassee Chan Center



Photo by Starr Schumaker

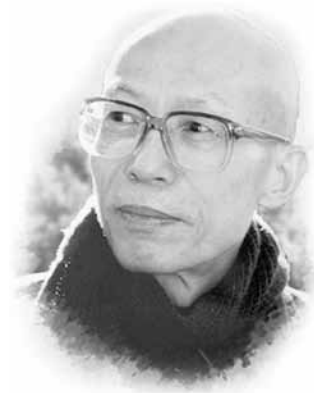
The Future

Retreats, classes and other upcoming events

Schedule is subject to change. Please check the website for updated and detailed information, or to register for activities online.

“Zen & Inner Peace”

Chan Master Sheng Yen’s weekly television program
Now on ICN Cable
Channel 24.2 in NY
Fridays 6:45 pm - 7:00 pm



Dharma Drum Retreat Center (DDRC) in Pine Bush, NY

(845) 744-8114 - ddrcc@dharmadrumretreat.org - www.dharmadrumretreat.org

REGULAR WEEKLY ACTIVITIES		
Thursday Evening Meditation	7:00 pm–9:00 pm	Sitting, walking, moving meditation, Dharma talk.
RETREATS (register online)		
1-Day & Children’s Program	Saturday Apr 5	9:00 am–5:00 pm Led by Venerable Chang Wen
	Saturday May 10	
	Saturday Jun 14	
Young People’s Retreat	Apr 11-13	Led by Venerable Chang Wen
10-Day Intensive Silent Illumination Retreat	May 23-Jun 1	Led by Dr. Simon Child
10-Day Intensive Chan Retreat	Jun 20-29	Led by Abbot Venerable Guo Xing
SPECIAL EVENTS		
Gardening Meditaton	Apr 26-27	DDRC Residents
Meditation in the Mountains	May 3	DDRC Residents
Family Weekend Activity	May 10-11	Led by Venerable Chang Wen
Photo Mind	May 17	Taylor Mitchell and Lan Xu

Chan Meditation Center (CMC) in Elmhurst, Queens, NY

(718) 592-6593 - chancenter@gmail.com - www.chancenter.org - www.ddmba.org

REGULAR WEEKLY ACTIVITIES		
Monday Night Chanting	7:30 pm–9:15 pm	Last Monday of each month: Recitation of the Eighty-eight Buddhas’ names and repentance
Tuesday Night Sitting Group	7:00 pm–9:30 pm	Sitting, yoga exercises, walking meditation, Dharma sharing, recitation of the Heart Sutra.
Saturday Sitting Group	9:00 am–3:00 pm	Sitting, yoga exercises, video teachings by Master Sheng Yen
Sunday Open House	10:00 am–4:00 pm	See below
CHAN MEDITATION CENTER (CMC) SUNDAY OPEN HOUSE		
Sunday Schedule	10:00 am–11:00 am	Sitting Meditation
	11:00 am–12:30 pm	Dharma Talk
	12:30 pm–1:00 pm	Food Offering and Announcements
	1:00 pm–1:45 pm	Vegetarian Lunch
Chanting and Recitation	1st Sunday 2:00 pm–3:30 pm	Guan Yin Bodhisattva Chanting Service
	2nd Sunday 2:00 pm–4:00 pm	Great Compassion Repentance Ceremony Dharani Sutra
	3rd Sunday 2:00 pm–4:00 pm	Earth Store Bodhisattva Sutra Chanting Service
	Last Sunday 2:00 pm–3:30 pm	Bodhisattva Precept Recitation Ritual
	(Please note: If there are five Sundays in the month, there will be a Guan Yin Bodhisattva Chanting Service on the 4th Sunday.)	
RETREATS (Pre-registration advised)		
1-Day Retreat	Apr 26	9:00 am–5:00 pm Led by Dr. Rebecca Li
	May 31	9:00 am–5:00 pm Led by Nancy Bonardi
	Jun 28	9:00 am–5:00 pm (TBA)
CLASSES AND WORKSHOPS (Pre-registration advised)		
Beginner’s Meditation Parts I & II	Apr 12 & 19	Saturdays 9:30 am–12:00 pm Led by Dr. Rikki Asher
Intermediate Meditation Class	Apr 26	Saturday 9:30 am–12:00 pm Led by Nancy Bonardi
Workshop: Harmonious Relationships	May 3	1:00 pm–3:00 pm Led by Dr. Rebecca Li
Dharma Drum for Young People (DDYP) Gathering	Every 3rd Saturday except otherwise noted	2:30 pm–5:00 pm. Buddhists and non-Buddhists ages 18-35 are welcome!
Taijiquan with David Ngo	Thursdays ongoing	7:30 pm–9:00 pm \$25 per 4-week month—\$80 for 16 classes First class is free for newcomers
SPECIAL EVENTS		
Buddha’s Birthday Celebration	May 18	10:00 am–3:30 pm Special Dharma Talk, Bathing the Buddha Ceremony
Film Viewing and Discussion	May 18	2:00 pm–5:00 pm Led by Dr. Peter Lin; check website for film description.

Chan Meditation Center Affiliates

NEW YORK - USA HEADQUARTERS			
Chan Meditation Center (CMC)			ddmbaus@yahoo.com www.chancenter.org
Dharma Drum Mountain Buddhist Association (DDMBA) America	90-56 Corona Avenue Elmhurst, NY 11373	(718) 592-6593	www.ddmba.org
Dharma Drum Mountain for Young People			www.collegedharma.org
Dharma Drum Retreat Center (DDRC)	184 Quannacut Road Pine Bush, NY 12566	(845) 744-8114 Fax: (845) 744-4753	ddrc@dharmadrumretreat.org www.dharmadrumretreat.org
TAIWAN - WORLD HEADQUARTERS			
Dharma Drum Mountain World Center for Buddhist Education	No.14-5, Lin 7, Sanchieh Village, Chinshan, Taipei	02-2498-7171 02-2498-7174 Fax: 02-2498-9029	webmaster@ddm.org.tw www.ddm.org.tw
Dharma Drum International Meditation Group		02-2893-4646 ext. 6504	contact@ddm.org.tw www.ddm.org.tw
Nung Chan Monastery	No. 89, Lane 65, Tayeh Road Peitou, Taipei	02-2893-3161 Fax: 02-2895-8969	
NORTH AMERICA - CANADA			
Toronto	1025 McNicoll Avenue Toronto, Ontario Canada, M1W 3W6	(416) 855-0531	ddmba.toronto@gmail.com www.ddmba-ontario.ca
Vancouver	8240 No.5 Road Richmond, BC Canada V6Y 2V4	(604) 277-1352	info@ddmba.ca www.ddmba.ca
NORTH AMERICA - MEXICO			
Chacala, Mexico	Mar de Jade Oceanfront Retreat Center Chacala, Nayarit,	(800) 257-0532 01-800-505-8005	info@mardejade.com www.mardejade.com
NORTH AMERICA - UNITED STATES			
California	DDMBA Los Angeles 4530 N. Peck Rd El Monte, CA 91732	(626) 350-4388	ddmbala@gmail.com www.ddmbala.org
	Sacramento	(916) 681-2416	ddmbasacra@yahoo.com
	San Francisco 255 H Street Fremont, CA 94536	(408) 900-7125	ddmbasf@yahoo.com www.ddmbasf.org
Colorado	Denver	(732)754-8984	tomchu100@gmail.com

Local organizations affiliated with CMC and DDMBA provide a place to practice with and learn from other Chan practitioners. If you have questions about schedules, activities or publications you may find useful information at one of our affiliates near you.

NORTH AMERICA - UNITED STATES			
Connecticut	Fairfield County	(203) 912-0734	contekalice@aol.com
	Hartford	(860) 805-3588	cmchartfordct@gmail.com http://www.ddmhartfordct.org
Florida	Gainesville	(352) 336-5301	LianFlorida@hotmail.com
	Miami	(954) 432-8683	ddmbaus@yahoo.com
	Orlando	(407) 671-6250	chihho2004@yahoo.com
	647 McDonnell Drive Tallahassee, FL 32310	(850)274-3996	tallahassee.chan@gmail.com www.tallahasseebuddhistcommunity.org
Georgia	Atlanta	(678) 809-5392	Schen@eleganthf.net
Illinois	Chicago 1234 N. River Road Mt. Prospect, IL 60056	(847)255-5483	ddmbachicago@gmail.com www.ddmbachicago.org
Massachusetts	Boston	(347) 922-6186	ddm.boston@gmail.com
Michigan	Lansing	(517) 614-4363	lkong2006@gmail.com
Missouri	St. Louis	(636) 825-3889	acren@aol.com
New Jersey	789 Jersey Ave. New Brunswick, NJ 08901	(732) 249-1898	enews@ddmba-nj.org www.ddmba-nj.org
Nevada	Las Vegas	(702) 896-4108	yhl2527@yahoo.com
North Carolina	Cary	(919) 677-9030	minganlee58@gmail.com
Pennsylvania	Philadelphia	(610) 254-5028	tchiang2001@hotmail.com
	State College	(814) 867-9253	ddmbapa@gmail.com www.ddmbapa.org
Tennessee	Memphis	(732) 777-9618	dan_tu@hotmail.com
Texas	Dallas	(682) 552-0519	ddmba_patty@hotmail.com
	Houston	(832)279-6786	g9g9@msn.com
Utah	Salt Lake City	(810) 947-9019	Inge_Fan@hotmail.com
Vermont	Burlington	(802) 658-3413	juichulee@yahoo.com www.ddmbavt.org
Washington	Seattle 14028 Bel-Red Road Suite 205, Bellevue WA 98007	(425) 957-4597	mhwong77@gmail.com seattle.ddmusa.org
Washington	District of Columbia	(240) 424-5486	chan@ddmbadc.org

Chan Meditation Center Affiliates

ASIA and AUSTRALASIA			
Australia	Melbourne 1 / 38 McDowall Street, Mitcham Victoria 3132, Australia	(03) 8822-3187	info@ddmmelbourne.org.au www.ddmmelbourne.org.au
	Sydney	(61-4) 131-85603	ddmsydney@yahoo.com.au www.ddm.org.au
Hong Kong	Room 203 2/F, Block B, Alexandra Industrial Building 23-27 Wing Hong Street Lai Chi Kok, Kowloon, Hong Kong	(852) 2865-3110 (852) 2295-6623	info@ddmhk.org.hk http://www.ddmhk.org.hk
Malaysia	Block B-3-16, 8 Avenue Pusat Perdagangan Sek. 8 Jala Sg. Jernih 46050 Petaling Jaya, Selangor	(60-3) 7960-0841	ddmmalaysia@gmail.com www.ddm.org.my
New Zealand	9 Scorpio Place, Mairangi Bay Auckland NZ	(09) 478 8430	
Singapore	Singapore	(65) 6735-5900	ddrumsingapore@gmail.com http://www.ddsingapore.org
Thailand	1471. Soi 31/1 Pattnakarn Rd. 10250 Bangkok Thailand	(662) 713-7815 (662) 713-7816	ddmbkk2005@gmail.com www.ddmth.com
EUROPE			
Belgium	15, Rue Jean Schaack L-2563 Luxemburg	(352) 400-080	ddm@chan.lu
Croatia	Dharmaaloka Buddhist Center Dordiceva 23, 10000 Zagreb	(385) 1-481 00 74	info@dharmaloka.org www.dharmaloka.org www.chan.hr
Poland	Zwiazek Buddystow Czan ul. Promienna 12 05-540 Zalesie Górne	(48) 22-7362252 Fax: (48) 22-7362251 Cell: +48601224999	budwod@budwod.com.pl www.czan.org.pl www.czan.eu
Switzerland	Zurich	(411) 382-1676	MaxKailin@chan.ch www.chan.ch
	Bern Haus Sein, Bruungasse 16, CH3011	(31) 352-2243	hthalmann@gmx.net www.chan-bern.ch
United Kingdom	Western Chan Fellowship 24 Woodgate Avenue Bury Lancashire, BL9 7RU	+44 (0) 1934 842017	secretary@westernchanfellowship.org www.westernchanfellowship.org
	The Old School House Weeton Lane Weeton LS17 0AW UK	(44) 7787 502 686	
	28 the Avenue London NW6 7YD UK		liew853@btinternet.com



7-Day Intensive Chan Retreat in Croatia, European Union

Led by Guo Ru Fashi
a Dharma heir of Master Sheng Yen
May 31-June 6, 2014
Chinese with English translation

contact Ante Samodol

info@linji.eu

www.linji.eu

Bodhidharma taught that we are intrinsically free from vexations and afflictions, and our true nature is already perfect and undefiled. *Two Entries and Four Practices* is one of the few texts that Bodhidharma composed. This short scripture contains the marrow, or essence, of all his teachings. Chan teacher Guo Gu offers a translation of this significant text, as well as an elaboration on the teachings on life and practice that it presents, which reflect the essence of Chan itself.



The Essence of Chan

A Practical Guide to Life and Practice
According to the Teachings of Bodhidharma

Guo Gu

Through the Chan gate we come back to our true home

21-DAY INTENSIVE

Chan Meditation RETREAT

Teachings on methods of relaxation, Silent Illumination and Huatou

1 – 22 August 2015

Dluzew near Warsaw, Poland

Led by **Chi Chern Fashi**

a Dharma Heir of Chan Master Sheng Yen

CONTACT Pawel Rosciszewski • +48 601224999 • budwod@budwod.com.pl • www.czan.eu



Through the Chan gate we come back to our true home



10-DAY INTENSIVE

Chan Meditation RETREAT

Teachings on methods of relaxation, Silent Illumination and Huatou

31 July – 10 August 2014

Led by **Chi Chern Fashi** • a Dharma Heir of Chan Master Sheng Yen

Dluzew near Warsaw, Poland

CONTACT Pawel Rosciszewski • +48 601224999 • budwod@budwod.com.pl • www.czan.eu



Vast space is all-embracing, the same as ultimate emptiness. — Hongzhi Zhengjue

5-DAY

Chan Meditation RETREAT

16 – 21 August 2014

Led by **Chi Chern Fashi** · a Dharma Heir of **Chan Master Sheng Yen**
Haus Tao, CH 9427 Wolfhalden, Switzerland

CONTACT Hildi Thalmann · info@chan-bern.ch · www.chan-bern.ch · www.haustao.ch



To take up This Great Affair, you must have a determined will. — Dahui Zonggao

10-DAY INTENSIVE

Huatou RETREAT

19 – 28 May 2014

Led by **Guo Ru Fashi** · a Dharma Heir of **Chan Master Sheng Yen**
Buddhist Monastery Viên Đức near Ravensburg, Germany

For experienced practitioners willing to accept the intensive teaching methods of Guo Ru Fashi

CONTACT Hildi Thalmann · info@chan-bern.ch · www.chan-bern.ch · www.vienduc.de

