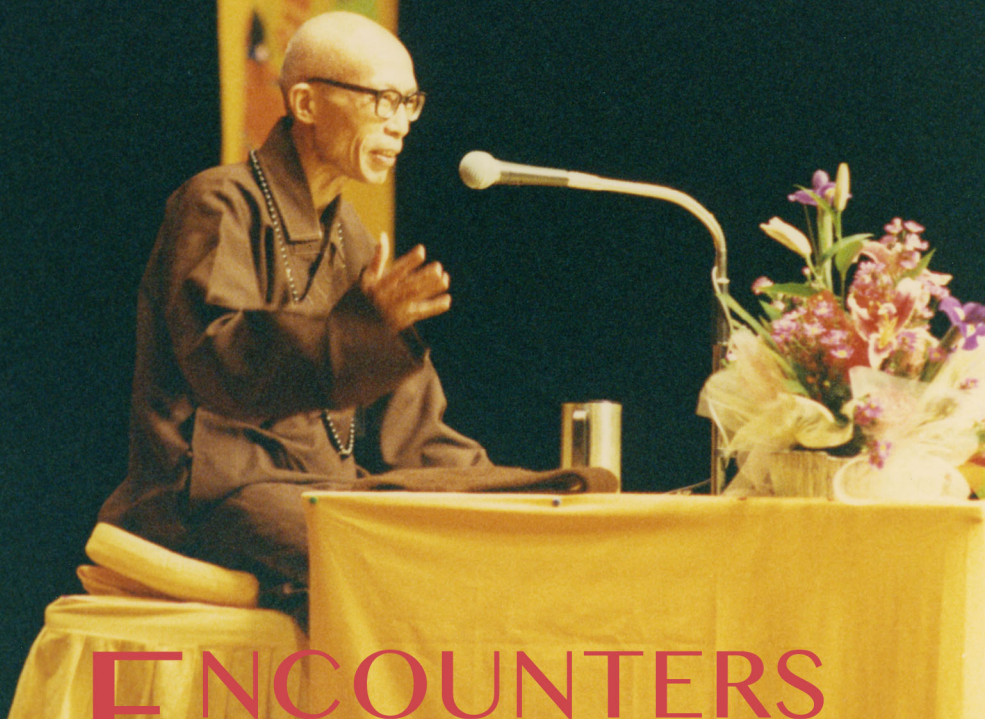


Pocket Guides to Buddhist Wisdom

A Living Example, Countless Teachings



ENCOUNTERS
with Master
Sheng Yen XII

ENCOUNTERS
with Master
Sheng Yen XII

Encounters with Master Sheng Yen XII

Pocket Guides to Buddhist Wisdom E-31

Publisher: Dharma Drum Mountain Culture and Educational Foundation
5F., No. 186, Gongguan Rd., Beitou District Taipei City 112-44, Taiwan

Tel: 886-2-2893-4646 Fax: 886-2-2896-0731

www.ddm.org.tw

Speakers: Liang Suhua, Guo Yong'an, Chen Bonan,
Chen Tianming, Huang Zhongjian

Editorial & Production: Cultural Center, Dharma Drum Mountain

Revision: International Translation Office

ISBN: 978-626-96780-7-5

1st Edition: December 2023

Preface

To share with the public the thoughts and life experiences of Dharma Drum Mountain founder Master Sheng Yen (also known as Shifu, meaning “Master”), the Sheng Yen Education Foundation embarked on a series of talks beginning in September of 2009. Fifty-two talks were given at the Sheng Yen Lecture Hall (located in the official residence where Master Sheng Yen lived in his final years). The talks were titled *A Living Example, Countless Teachings—Encounters with Master Sheng Yen* and we invited all his monastic and lay disciples to share with us their stories about Shifu, how he taught them through his living example and words. Listening to these speakers’ personal accounts of the interactions between teacher and student allowed the audience to commemorate Master Sheng Yen’s journey, and once again hear his gracious teachings.

The talks include stories of Master Sheng Yen’s everyday life, how he would give detailed guidance to his disciples regarding their speech and actions. There are also accounts of his travels to share the Buddhadharma locally and overseas, reaching out to the public, and teaching them skillfully and flexibly based on the existing circumstances. Even in his later

years when he became quite ill, he was an example of how to face life and death with freedom and ease. All of these examples, no matter how small the story or how short the conversation, radiate Shifu's compassion and wisdom. They inspire us to vow to "Emulate the worthies and sages, practice what the Dharma has taught us, and repay through our heartfelt gratitude."

At the end of the series, we felt that the interactions from these true life stories were brimming with the Dharma spirit. Hence the audiences initiated and organized transcripts of the talks, to be compiled and published, hoping to allow the general public to learn from the wisdom of Master Sheng Yen, so that together we can realize his vision to create a pure land on this earth.

Many of Master Sheng Yen's early disciples in Chan practice, both from the West and East, also have their inspirational experiences to share regarding his model and teachings. Therefore, through interviews their stories have been edited and included as well.

Table of Contents

A Compassionate Wake-up Call

Liang Suhua..... 7

Spread Kindness to Everyone

Guo Yong'an..... 33

Gratitude for His Kindness and Recognition

Chen Bonan..... 53

Contributing the Self for the Benefit of All

Chen Tianming..... 77

Seeing Shifu's Legacy

Huang Zhongjian..... 101

A Compassionate Wake-up Call

Liang Suhua

Shifu's time was so precious, but he was still willing to spend as much as 15 minutes to teach and guide me.

I really feel ashamed, but also cherish this blessing.

At the time, I might not realize what Shifu's words implied, sometimes it had to take me two years before I could really understand, but I know that was a wake-up call marked by compassion.



Introducing the Speaker

Liang Suhua

She is a senior supporter of Dharma Drum Mountain Hong Kong Centre. In 1984, her Buddhist friend gave her Master Sheng Yen's books and a copy of the *Humanity magazine* she brought from Taiwan. From then on she immersed herself in them, and actively searched for Dharma Drum Mountain's liaison office in Wan Chai, Hong Kong.

In 1997, the liaison office in Wan Chai was facing possible close-down. Liang then applied for bank loan to purchase the property, so as to keep the operation of the Dharma center going, thereby winning widespread recognition among the devotees.

Everyone has a loving family. In my childhood, mine was an orphanage run by a monastery.

When I was about six years old, both my parents died. Before my father passed away, he was still working hard to find a right place to entrust his three children to. He valued education very much, so when he heard that Venerable Ci Xiang was the president of the Buddhist Tai Kwong Yuen, a beautiful blue-print emerged in his mind: “If I can send all three children to Ven. Ci Xiang’s place, then they will be able to study there. If they get to study there, they will have knowledge; and if they have knowledge, they will certainly have a bright future.” So, three day days before he died, he sent us to Tai Kwong Yuen. At the time my mother was still alive, but she couldn’t support us. A year later, she also died. At the time, my brother was only 11 years old. He represented us to see my mother. So both my younger brother and I didn’t get to see my mother before she died. I know that my parents had been in agony. But as a child, I didn’t understand what it meant.

Meeting my kind teacher and the Dharma

My kind teacher, Ven. Ci Xiang, was a Buddhist nun who relied on self-study most of the time in her early days. Later she studied sutras with Elderly Venerable Hai Ren. In 1954, when the Second World War ended, there were many orphans and children who had dropped out of school. So the venerable compassionately set up an orphanage to adopt parentless children, and also founded a charitable school. So, luckily, the three of us were adopted by him. Had I not encountered my kind teacher while at the orphanage, and had instead been raised in a nursing family, I probably wouldn't have realized that the Buddha's teaching was so good and so precious, not to mention that later I would be able to manage to get a bank loan, voluntarily helping Dharma Drum Mountain to find a place to establish a group practice center.

Though I grew up at a temple, I didn't really spend time learning Buddhist practice. Ven. Ci Xiang was always so busy. In that difficult time, it was certainly not easy for a Buddhist nun to single-handedly set up an orphanage and

organize a charitable school. She had to make special efforts to raise money to support the school, so she didn't really have time to teach us Buddhism. Nevertheless, I believe this environment certainly had an influence on the children there. Initially, Tai Kwong Yuen only had a primary school. But because many children couldn't afford to go to high school after graduation, this thus prompted the venerable, who couldn't bear to see them having to give up education, to set up a high school too. I still remember that the monastery had many slogans. For example, bits of the text of the whole Sutra on the *Eight Kinds of Attentiveness of Great Persons* were stuck on the walls. Ven. Ci Xiang also repeatedly reminded us, for example, "Non-attachment is the first and foremost benefit. Knowing to be content is the first and foremost wealth. Good spiritual friends are the first and foremost affinity. Nirvana is the first and foremost happiness. Be good at cultivating temperament amid anger. Refrain from baseless remarks. Beware of mistakes made in a hurry. Make good use of available money." They were also like slogans, which were stuck on the walls. The venerable wanted us to see those Dharma words at any time and place, whether being in a classroom or in the Buddha hall.

Since childhood I have shown particular interest in the Chinese language. When I saw texts or sentences, I would try to figure out their meaning and want to remember and recite them. Other children at the orphanage were not like me, so fascinated with language. I couldn't say why, but I believed I was the one who benefited the most. As time flies, I grew up at Tai Kwong Yuen and eventually got married. Counting my blessings, I can't express enough of my gratitude.

Living a simple life at an orphanage, we did our daily activities at the Buddha hall, on the sports field, and at the school. We hardly had any contact with people from outside of the Yuen, so I had completely no idea about what the external world was like. In those difficult years, when children had the opportunity to study, got enough to eat, and had everything arranged and sorted out by others, we would already feel so happy. Although the monastery had very limited resources, the children also had to help with making money to support ourselves. Apart from studying, we had to help with many daily chores, such as collecting fallen leaves, chopping wood, harvesting longans, and raising bees for honey, and picking Sweet

Osmanthus, so we didn't even have time to indulge in discursive thinking. After finishing our work, we were usually so tired that we could simply fall into sleep right away. This, however, allowed us to live our days peacefully day by day, without feeling stressed at all.

Getting to know Shifu's ideals through the *Humanity magazine*

At the time there were only two universities in Hong Kong: the University of Hong Kong, and the Chinese University of Hong Kong. With limited study places, it was extremely hard to get into a university. Since Tai Kwong Yuen is a Chinese-language high school, we could only take the entrance examination for the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and that was such a "narrow gate". But there was an alternative route; that is to go to a university in Taiwan after graduating from high school. However, in the year I graduated, Taiwan was forced out of the UN. Ven. Ci Xiang didn't think it was a good idea for me to go to Taiwan for university; she expected me to first go to the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and then

teach at my alma mater after graduation, while receiving further guidance from her. But the thing was, the Chinese University of Hong Kong set the entrance requirements very high: candidates were supposed to be strong in all five academic subjects. I was weak in the English subject, and I knew that. So I decided to just take the entrance examination once. In the end, as expected, I didn't get in. So instead, I decided to find a job, which could also help my younger brother continue with his studies, for he had dropped out of school from the second year of the high school. I never complained, and neither did I feel stressed. Instead, as I believed, I might not be particularly smart, but I believed I was blessed in my own way.

Right at this moment, the conditions for me to engage in Buddhist practice appeared just like that. The person who introduced me to Buddhist practice was Lu Rongzhang, a lay practitioner who was very diligent. He travelled to Dharma Drum Mountain's Chan Meditation Center in New York to attend the seven-day Chan retreat led by Master Sheng Yen more than a dozen times. I was grateful to him for bringing me Shifu's books and a copy of the *Humanity*

magazine in 1984, when he came back to Taiwan to visit the Nung Chan Monastery in search for his spiritual roots. At the very moment of encountering the Buddhist teaching, I felt my heart was like a desert finally receiving long-awaited rain. Although *Humanity magazine* was free, every month when I received a new issue I would make a donation via wire transfer to support its publication, and I thought that was the right thing to do. In the magazine, apart from Shifu's Dharma articles, sometimes they would share the letters Shifu wrote for the DDM sangha, which allowed me to know about his ideals and direction.

Dharma Drum Mountain was founded in 1989. Through the free distributed books they published and sent me from time to time, I got to keep in close contact with Dharma Drum Mountain. I very much identified with Shifu's effort in promoting public Buddhist education, and how he valued the nurturing of talent among the four assemblies of practitioners.

Not long afterwards, the first liaison office in Hong Kong for Dharma Drum Mountain was established, located

in a small place in Causeway Bay. Its main function was to offer a library service. After receiving the notice, I would go there to borrow cassette tapes and books. I would read the book, listen to the cassette tape, and take notes at the same time. This was when I started to engage in Buddhist practice. Sorting out the notes I took helped me learn the Buddhist teaching and know more about Dharma Drum Mountain. This process was very important to me. At the time I was listening to cassette tapes for the *Lotus Sutra* and the “Dharma Drum Mountain’s Transmission of Its Legacy.” Later, the contents had been compiled and edited into books. I felt as if it was Dharma Drum Mountain that had come to look for me, but actually it was the prajna in Shifu’s written words that helped me build the karmic connection with the Dharma.

Taking the Three Refuges, asking for advice through correspondences

At the time, people who went to the library were all Shifu’s monastic disciples. I was not, but often went there to study, which seemed kind of awkward. So I asked

Ven. Ci Xiang for advice, because I would like to take the Three Refuges, to be ordained by Master Sheng Yen. In the end, what was pleasing to me was that Ven. Ci Xiang immediately agreed. So in 1995, I attended the Three Refuges ceremony presided over by Shifu, and officially became a Buddhist.

After I came back from Taiwan, Ven. Ci Xiang asked me, “So what has your shifu taught you?” So, without much thought I immediately recited The Common Endeavor of Buddhists composed by Master Sheng Yen, which, comprising 20 sentences of Dharma words, would later become my personal motto. That represented how Shifu had made an effort to first digest the deep and profound Buddhist teachings and then conveyed their essence in plain and accessible language, so that people would find it less difficult and easier to understand, that it was actually very practical methods for Buddhist practice in daily life. Afterwards, I attended seven-day Chan retreats and Buddha-name recitation retreats, received the Bodhisattva Precepts, worked as a volunteer to help with seven-day retreats, which all took place at Nung Chan Monastery. So

mostly I met Shifu there. Whenever I had questions to ask Shifu, to save his precious time, I would first sort out my thoughts and then write them down on a piece of paper, and presented it to Shifu for answer.

Shifu's books greatly inspired me. For example, after reading the *Buddhism of Tomorrow*, I realized that the prospect of Buddhism was so bright and far-reaching. I really admired Shifu's bold insight and determination. When he was 40, he decided to go to Japan for further study. Because society at the time was still very traditional, without a formal higher education degree, it was hard for monastics to preach the Dharma for intellectuals. Clearly knowing the challenges, Shifu never hesitated. Once he made up his mind, he would then charge forward, all for the sake of sentient beings, without finding it stressful at all. Reflecting the spirit of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva, he kept this thought in mind without being distracted, and never once grew tired or weary in his bodily, verbal, and mentally actions. Among the highly attained monks and great practitioners in recent Buddhist history, Shifu was indeed an excellent teacher, rare and hard to find in 100 years.

Making a great vow, with multiple conditions working together

In 1997, Dharma-brother Chen Bonan went to Taiwan for a three-day Chan Retreat Camp for Prominent Professionals. He was a lawyer. After he came back, he took the initiative to help our liaison office apply for a charitable organization license. We didn't expect that right after the license was approved, the then convening member Qiu Chengyao felt ill. As many expected and hoped, Chen agreed to take up the position as a convening member. However, something unexpected happened again. At the time, the original location of our Hong Kong liaison office was owned by some Buddhist devotee. For personal reasons, he had to sell it. I still remember at the time Chen called for an urgent meeting and announced that it was probably about time for our group to dismantle, and everybody was welcome to take home with them free-distributed books and items placed there. All the people present were so shocked that we simply had no idea what to do next. It was certainly not easy for us as Buddhist friends to join together as a group, if it really had to be

dismantled, it would be very difficult for us to get together again anytime soon in the future. So this mustn't happen.

After several months of agonizing struggle, finally I proposed that I get a bank loan to buy the estate where our liaison office was located. At the time I felt greatly pressured, because the housing prices in Honk Kong back in 1997 were rather high, not to mention that I actually didn't have a job. So getting a loan means that I had to let my husband know and gain his approval. But unfortunately he didn't agree.

Later, as I recalled, I thought it was thanks to my two teachers that I was able to make such a great vow: Ven. Ci Xiang and Master Sheng Yen. It was their compassion and wisdom that gave me the power. After knowing about this, Ven. Ci Xiang immediately promised that she would help, by explaining to my husband the meaning and merit of giving. Later, my husband finally nodded. Although he had agreed in the end, this was quite a large sum, which still posed a big problem. At the time we didn't even have enough money for the down payment to sign the contract.

But right at the most difficult point, an opportunity emerged, just like the morning sunshine breaking the clouds, making the whole thing become so beautiful. At the time, the Hong Kong government happened to approve the inheritance from my mother-in-law. After deducting inheritance tax, it was exactly the sum for the down payment. This was a turning point. If it had not been for the support from the Dharma-protecting deities and the empowerment of various Buddhas and bodhisattvas, I am afraid this vow of mine wouldn't have been fulfilled so perfectly.

As the *Dhammapada* says, “Do not disregard evil, thinking ‘It will not come to me!’ Falling drops of water can fill up even a water jar. The fool fills himself up with evil, even if collecting it just little by little. Do not disregard goodness, thinking ‘It will not come to me!’ Falling drops of water can fill up even a water jar. The clever one fills himself up with goodness, even if collecting it just little by little.” Thinking back about how I vowed to buy out the location of our liaison office, the process might be hard and challenging, but it was definitely worth it. And now

I am happy to see how our Dharma center has developed to this day, a working together of various positive causes and conditions. So, do not disregard any small goodness. As long as it is something wholesome, we should just immediately go for it.

Compassionate and strict admonition resembling a retreat interview

I recall Shifu was very kind and compassionate, though he could sometimes be very strict too. I remember once I wrote a note asking him a question, about a Buddhist concept. Upon seeing that, Shifu seriously told me, “This way of thinking is very problematic.” And then, Shifu folded the note several times, before bending down and putting it into a bin. Standing next to him and watching his graceful and gentle movements, that was really a moment that so touched me. Shifu was truly compassionate: he was teaching me a lesson, but he was worried that I might get hurt, so he used that move to let me know. Shifu accommodated people’s spiritual tendencies to teach them the right doctrines. Missing out

on this, the next time the opportunity might not be there. He knew at the moment the right aspect of the Buddhist teaching that I needed the most, and so he directly pointed that out, to correct my fault.

But, however strict Shifu could be, I would never walk away. Shifu's time was so precious, yet he still didn't mind sparing up to 15 minutes to teach and guide me. I felt really ashamed, but also cherished that blessing. I might not be able to understand the underlying meaning of Shifu's words—sometimes it would take me as much as two years to realize—but I knew for certain that that represents a wake-up call marked by compassion. Usually it is during an interview at a seven-day retreat that Shifu would use this method. In normal daily lives, when I was scolded by Shifu, I would take it as if it was an interview during a retreat.

From 1998 on, I would write letters to Shifu every year. If Shifu had something important to let me know, he would reply. In 2001, my son went to Taiwan to attend the first Chan practice camp designed for college students. The

retreat took place at the Lingquan Monastery in Keelung, and I volunteered to help with that retreat too. In an elevator I met Shifu. At first I thought Shifu didn't recognize me, but when he saw my volunteer nametag, he apologized to me, "I received your letter, and got your donation money too." He then went on to say, "I am sorry." I was actually astonished. I didn't understand why Shifu said sorry to me, and later I didn't have the chance to ask about it. The only thing is that afterwards whenever I met Shifu I always felt a bit uneasy. At the Hong Kong center, it would probably be hard to find another thoughtless person with sheer enthusiasm like me. So I guess no one else would encounter such an amazing and wonderful condition.

Guarding against our mind, learning Shifu's teachings

Chan practice, Buddha-name recitation, and sutra chanting are methods of practice I use in my daily life.

In the *Sutra on the Division of the Effect of Good and Evil Actions*, it says, "Guard against and keep alert with our

mind.” I think that is the same with what Shifu taught us: keep your mind where your body is. In our practice, we’re supposed to guard against our mind, being aware of the thoughts arising in our mind. About the Dharma-methods dedicated to Guanyin Bodhisattva taught by Shifu, he mentioned that we can recite “Guanyin Bodhisattva” or recite the *Ten-Phrase Avalokitesvara Sutra for Prolonging Life*. I adhere to his teaching and constantly recite them. I uphold the Dharma-methods taught by Shifu, and when I find some aspects particularly useful to me I’ll write them down in a notebook, so that I can repeatedly review them later. By reviewing what we’ve learned, we’ll actually get a fresh point, and this is of great help to me.

In earlier years, I had to look after my mother-in-law, so I couldn’t really leave Hong Kong. It was until 1995 that I finally could travel to Taiwan. I still remember at that time seven-day Chan retreats took place at the Dharma Drum Mountain complex, and seven-day Buddha-name recitation retreats took place at Nung Chan Monastery. One year, in December, I attended a seven-day retreat of Amitabha Buddha recitation. Two days before the retreat

concluded, Shifu returned from America. Once, at the dining hall, Shifu asked us, “Whenever you attend a seven-day retreat, you should volunteer to help with a seven-day retreat for at least once. Now I am asking you: please raise your hand if you would like to volunteer to help with seven-day retreats afterwards.” I immediately raised my hand, without second thought or hesitation.

The methods Shifu taught are indeed useful. Once you believe them, you will naturally delve into them and train yourself. I think most importantly is to truly believe, without harboring any doubt, or uncertainty. In his book entitled the *Dharma-methods of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva’s Great Vows*, in the Pocket Books of Wisdom series, Shifu encouraged people to recite the name of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva. So that is what I did. Shifu advised people to study the three well-known sutras associated with Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, and so I did. When we encountered grave difficulties, Shifu taught us to recite the *Sutra on the Original Vows of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva* for 100 times, or recite the Bodhisattva’s name for 5000 times every day. And so I did this too. With the attitude of

“keeping our minds on plowing the field, not anticipating the harvest”, overtime we will naturally be a different person.

Once, a venerable came to Hong Kong to give a Dharma talk, and he expressed Shifu’s admonition on his behalf, “When you are seriously ill, you must make three vows: firstly, the vow to become a Buddhist lifetime after lifetime; secondly, the vow to protect and support the Three Jewels lifetime after lifetime; and thirdly, the vow to dedicate yourself to the Three Jewels in this lifetime.” In 2014, my husband suddenly had a stroke, and started to oppose my Buddhist faith. But I still kept practicing the methods Shifu had taught us. After around a week, I also added the *Ten-Phrase Avalokitesvara Sutra for Prolonging Life* to my daily practice. At the time, I knew the texts very well, because I repeatedly recited them in my mind all day long. Gradually, I saw the effect. So I started to do the practice I normally did in daily life, such as repentance prostration. By listening to Shifu’s words and practicing the methods as taught by Shifu, I indeed benefit a lot.

Vowing to engage in practice lifetime after lifetime

Now I'd like to share a very valuable letter, which is a reply letter Shifu wrote me in June 2001.

Dear virtuous practitioner Liang Guozhao,

I have received the information and donation money you sent. I greatly appreciate your support of Dharma Drum Retreat Center, and I can understand the kindness of Ven. Ci Xiang in raising and caring for you. Now I will issue a receipt for your annual offering and your donation to the practice center as a commemoration. The Pratyutpanna Samadhi Sutra is indeed exquisite and beautiful, and the appendix for the purposes of scholarly research is also very useful. Please send my regards to your husband Ma Guang'rong. I wish you grow and develop in merit and wisdom.

Another one was written by Shifu at Dharma Drum Retreat Center, in December 2003.

Dear virtuous practitioner Liang Guozhao,

I have received the register mail you sent to Dharma Drum Retreat Center. I travelled to Israel, and tomorrow I will be flying back to Taipei via Vancouver. Your long letter indeed touched me, and I am grateful for your donation and offering. For many years you have supported the Three Jewels with enthusiasm and passion, and have diligently engaged in practice. Especially, your support for the Dharma affairs at Dharma Drum Mountain Hong Kong Center has helped introduce more people to Dharma Drum Mountain. The current convener and vice-convener are extremely important...with this letter I am sending you the receipt as a commemoration, and please send my regards to your husband, and I wish your children all the best.

In 2009, Shifu passed away, overseas devotees immediately initiated the online group practice of Buddha-name recitation in real time. We were especially grateful to the DDM sangha for arranging and carrying out the funeral in such a solemn and comprehensive manner. Upon hearing the news of Shifu's death, devotees in Hong Kong immediately booked tickets to fly to Taiwan. At the time we listened to Ven. Guo Huei's Dharma talk, recited

Amitabha Buddha's name together and dedicated the merit to Shifu, praying for his rebirth in the Pure Land of Eternally Quiescent Light. That indeed helped calm my grieving and unsettled mind. The aged Shifu had been ill for many years, but he was still suffering for the sake of sentient beings. So we should really let go. We may feel reluctant, but it is time for us to take on the task.

The biggest influence Shifu had on me is: I deeply believe in the Buddha's teaching and accept the law of cause and effect. Buddhist practice is supposed to benefit self and others, so I vow to engage in Buddhist practice lifetime after lifetime. Facing the suffering, emptiness, and impermanence in life, when encountering any tests and trials, we should always apply the Dharma to deal with them, as well as take care of others and contribute to society with a mind of non-self. That way, we are the ones that benefit the most.

Making vows and putting them into real practice is the most important thing in Buddhist practice. Often in hospital, we can feel how sentient beings are suffering. So I

usually recite and take the Four Great Vows. “I vow to take across numberless living beings; I vow to cut off endless affliction; I vow to study the countless Dharma methods; I vow to realize the supreme Buddha Way.” After having developed a deeper realization, every day when I take the vow, my mind is filled with sincerity and devotion, unlike what I used to be: mouthing the words without mindfulness. I’m grateful for what Shifu had brought along as the most precious gift—compassion, wisdom, gratitude, and appreciation.

Spread Kindness to Everyone

Guo Yong'an

Shifu's writing is so small and tightly packed on a little notebook that it is difficult for others to read it.

Later I read in Shifu's books about his habit on jotting down every single detail of his trips, including time, places, persons, key points, etc.

Shifu encountered a lot of people and things, but he never disregarded any of them. He always made an effort to offer himself to others, spreading kindness to everyone.



Introducing the Speaker

Guo Yong'an

Guo Yong'an is a senior supporter of the Dharma Drum Mountain Hong Kong Center and the convener of the DDM Honorary Board of Directors in Hong Kong. In 1988, he and his friends approached the Chinese Buddhist Library and the Hong Kong Buddhist Youth Association for help in arranging Shifu's travel to Hong Kong for a Dharma talk. During that time, he also served as Shifu's trip attendant and interpreter when Shifu was attending guests.

For many years, he has supported the Dharma Drum Mountain Hong Kong Center. He is well regarded by the juniors for his commitment to study, support, and spread the Dharma. In 2008, he was appointed convener of the Hong Kong Center.

Looking back in time, the recollection is fading.

I was born into a non-Buddhist family, although my mother was a Buddhist folklore follower. Among the eight siblings, I was the only one who would accompany my mother to the temple and occasionally read those volumes, unaware that they were sutras. However, I enjoyed the sound of chanting. My sister went to a Buddhist school, whereas I went to a Catholic school.

My growing up experience was rather easy, with few difficulties or doubts. However, there were times I would feel overwhelmed and a little lost when I quieted down, but I did not know how to describe them. I wasn't like other people who were satisfied and happy with food, drink, recreation, and entertainment. I've always had vague doubts about life, such as "Why am I here?" and "What is the point of being born into this world?" Even though I had no desire to seek answers, those questions remained in my mind.

Engaging in Dharma centers, learning about Buddhist cultures

I was first introduced to Buddhism by Gao Qinghui, the founder of Buddhist Philosophy Bookshop. My wife and his wife went to the same school. At first, he introduced me to several books. Buddhism was not popular at the time, and getting Buddhist books was not easy. But since I met him, he's been like a free library, lending me any books I wanted to read. He was also always happy to give me book recommendations. He once sent me a set of "Wonderful Cloud Collection" written by Master Yin Shun as soon as I finished reading one of Master's books. I was young, read quickly, and could easily assimilate what I read. The more I read, the more I became interested, and I couldn't put it down. Sometimes there is no haste to find out the solution to life; many causes and conditions just happen naturally. Remembering the past makes me feel so grateful.

In 1985, I first learned about Buddhism. The following year, I started to participate in Dharma classes and events

at numerous Dharma centers, including Po Lin Monastery, Buddhist Youth Association, and Tung Lin Kok Yuen. My wife occasionally joined in, and when circumstances allowed I would even bring our seven-year-old son. The reason for this is because if I participated alone, I would be estranged from my family and would find it more difficult to learn the Dharma. But things would be different if the whole family participated. So, if I participated in ten activities at that time, my family would participate in around six of them. They had no objections, and it was like a weekend family gathering. Even though I didn't have many annual leaves, I would attend the seven-day meditation retreat at Hui Wan Memorial Hall and the Great Compassion Repentance Ceremony at Po Lin Monastery each year.

Those activities gave me joy in the Dharma, so I continued to engage. I think it was all thanks to the causes and conditions that when I participated in those events, I would learn new information and attend more activities in different places. I was like a sponge, absorbing various methods and facts about Buddhist practice. Even though I

wasn't deeply involved in one specific Dharma approach, I was really dedicated, and thus was able to learn about the rich and diverse Buddhist cultures.

Serving as Shifu's trip attendant and interpreter

Not long after I met Mr. Gao, who is pious and creative, he had the idea of inviting Master Sheng Yen from Taiwan to visit Hong Kong and give a lecture. More surprisingly, he soon gained the Master's approval. Mr. Gao, who at the time was an office worker like me, asked for my assistance. So, the two of us started the planning for the lecture from scratch. Despite the fact that I was new to Buddhism, I boldly approached Buddhist Youth Association to help with the preparation work, as I had previously participated in their events. And it was at that point when the right conditions arose for me to follow Master Sheng Yen for Buddhist practice.

The cause and conditions that allowed me to get close to Shifu were fantastic. I took on the role of Shifu's

attendant while he was in Hong Kong, going with him to events, assisting him in hosting visitors, and preparing vegetarian meals. In the first two or three years since 1988, I was Shifu's attendant on his visits to Hong Kong. Shifu didn't bring any of his disciples with him on his first trip to Hong Kong, perhaps because he was young or to save money on airline fees. Therefore, I was lucky to be his attendant and have interaction with him. Although many people in Hong Kong at the time could speak English, Mandarin was not as widely spoken as Cantonese. I was fortunate to have been chosen because I speak both Mandarin and Cantonese.

The cause and conditions were miraculous. My major at the Chinese University of Hong Kong was Economics, and my electives were Erhu and Mandarin, both of which were quite uncommon subjects. Actually, I chose Mandarin since it was simpler for me to learn because I was previously familiar with its grammar. If I had to start from scratch learning Japanese or another language, it would be challenging. So, I successfully completed my first year of Mandarin study. In the second year, I chose

Mandarin again, but at a higher level. In other words, I got better at Mandarin.

Shifu had many opportunities to meet with people during his trip to Hong Kong, so as his assistant I naturally took on the role of an interpreter as well. However, there were times when an interpreter wasn't necessary, such as when Shifu was speaking with Ven. Chang Huai or other venerables from Mainland China since they could converse in native dialects or Mandarin. I had no idea that the Mandarin I had acquired in school would come in handy later.

At that time, my wife and I shared the attendant tasks; she was in charge of cooking, while I was in charge of bringing meals to Shifu and accompanying him to events. We delivered lunches and dinners, but for breakfast, we got some bread, cheese, etc for Shifu to prepare himself. I wasn't a thoughtful person or a competent cook. My wife was more thoughtful, but she felt under pressure to figure out what to cook to satisfy Shifu's appetite. In Hong Kong at the time, vegetarian cuisine was not very common.

So she decided to make simple meals out of potatoes, tomatoes, vegetables, tofu, etc. Usually, the meals were prepared at home, and I delivered them to Shifu, where I waited while he ate. Gradually, I realized that Shifu was an easy person to get along with. But I was still worried that I wouldn't be able to take good care of him.

A life lesson on preparing and delivering meals

Shifu once asked me, "Do you have bun here?" I said, "Of course." However, in Hong Kong at the time, the so-called bun was made of fine white flour, which was not the same as Shifu expected. It wasn't until much later when visiting Nung Chan Monastery in Taiwan that I learned how tasty and healthy a bun containing grains and nuts might be.

I'm embarrassed to say that my wife and I had little experience in this area, and we also lacked the necessary appliances in our modest house. Despite Shifu's limited appetite, we tried to prepare extra meals. We eventually

came up with a simple and waste-free solution: my wife would cook the meals and fill them up to the quantity Shifu required, and we'd eat the remainder. Although we did our best, I'm afraid it wasn't enough. We're learning by doing. Shifu sometimes gave us advice or told us what he wanted to eat, and we'd do our best to accommodate him. But one day Shifu said he wanted to eat burdock root, which we couldn't make because there was no burdock root in Hong Kong and we didn't even know what burdock root was. Shifu remembered everything so well that when he revisited Hong Kong later, he brought us a burdock root and said, "This is burdock root." That is a really a practical life lesson.

We once ate lunch at the Buddhist Youth Association on Boundary Street, which was prepared by Ven. Chang Huai. He was well-known for his Luo Han Zhai. And we had heard Shifu liked it. Luo Han Zhai is a vegetarian dish made with soybean sprouts, tofu, tomatoes, and potatoes, among other ingredients. It was a pleasant surprise to discover how well tomatoes paired with tofu. Since then, we have learned how to prepare this dish for Shifu.

Setting a good example for others

Everyone told me that becoming Shifu's attendant was a blessing, but I had no idea at the time. When I had that opportunity, I was just starting out as a Buddhist, and all I could think about was becoming a good attendant. Although I wasn't overly tense, I was quite cautious throughout the process. Shifu was unfamiliar with Hong Kong, so I took care of him by arranging his schedules, among other things. The Buddhist Youth Association had invited Shifu's to visit Hong Kong on multiple occasions, and I would work with them on specific details of its execution and provide support. Being a new Buddhist at the time, I had no idea what to ask or learn from Shifu. So Shifu and I only had a few brief chats, some of which were about Hong Kong. Now as I think back about it, I regret not having asked Shifu questions regarding the Dharma.

I used to move quickly, especially when eating or walking. When I served as an attendant, I was even faster. I had to eat first before rushing on to other things like checking to see if the car had arrived or if people had

arrived. So I had to eat and walk swiftly. Shifu would sometimes remind me, “Slow down, slow down.” But I thought to myself, “How can I slow down when I have so many things to arrange, and how can things get done if I slow down?” That was my immediate reaction.

Shifu gave off the impression of being a scholar, and therefore many referred to him as a scholar monk. I enjoy reading Shifu’s books because I like how he explains the Dharma in a way that is consistent with scientific reasoning and modern public perception. This was clearly different from what was common in most monasteries. In the traditional way of explaining the Dharma, Buddhist terminology was extensively used. Shifu, on the other hand, would use examples from everyday life to make the Dharma easier for non-Buddhists to understand. Since 1988, I have followed Shifu’s teachings because they are fantastic, and I am so grateful to have Shifu as my great teacher.

Shifu was earnest, careful, humble, and polite when interacting with people and dealing with things. I remember that whenever Shifu came to Hong Kong, even

though I was no longer his attendant, I would go and pay Shifu a visit, sometimes with Mr. Gao. Hong Kongers typically send guests to the doors to say goodbye. But Shifu once sent me to the elevator, which was some distance from his room. Shifu waited until I entered the elevator before turning and returning to his room. It really made a deep impression on me because I had never done it that way before. Who would do it that way? Shifu was a monk, and I was his disciple and ex-attendant, so I should have been the one to show him respect. I later understood that Shifu was teaching me the principles of how to interact with people.

I once went with Shifu to see Ven. Sheng Yi on Lantau Island along with a few other Dharma friends. We were chatting on the ferry on the way back when Shifu disappeared! As I hastily searched for Shifu, I saw him sitting on a chair, writing. His writing was so small and dense that I could hardly read it. Later, I learned from Shifu's book that he had a habit of making notes about his itineraries, including the time, place, people, key points, and so forth. As his attendant, I felt bad for doing nothing.

Shifu was very meticulous since he could have asked his disciples to assist him, but he didn't. Shifu had encountered many individuals and various experiences, but he had never neglected any of them. As soon as he had the chance, he would offer himself to others, spreading kindness to everyone.

Right belief in Dharma, millennium monastery

Once, during a casual talk, Shifu said to me, "I'm planning to establish the Dharma Drum Mountain." When I heard it, I became curious, so I asked him, "There's already a Nung Chan Monastery, why do you still need to build a Dharma Drum Mountain?" Shifu patiently explained the idea to me. I was unable to understand because I imagined how difficult it would be for Shifu to build a monastery that lasts a millennium! Later, when I realized the scale of DDM and its Dharma-propagation strategies, I began to understand that, in Shifu's eyes, it was the ideal world center for Buddhist education.

Dharma Drum Mountain has an organized and systematic structure for its Dharma-propagation endeavor. For example, at each Dharma function and Chan retreat, there will be a supervisor who oversees the rules and reminds participants of important details. Normally, when one first enters a monastery, one feels uneasy. However, if one comes to DDM even by themselves, he or she will soon adapt to the environment by simply remaining relaxed and following the rules.

I've continued to read Shifu's books—*Correct Buddhist Belief* and *Questions and Answers on Buddhism*—over and over until this day. Sometimes people ask me questions to which I don't know the answer, or to which I know the answer but can't properly respond, so I keep reading Shifu's books to acquire his teachings. For example, a friend asked me, "What is transferring merits?" Because we were merely chatting, he didn't have much time to hear me explain in detail. If my response to him was "reading the gatha of merit transmission," I'm afraid it would be unacceptable to him as a non-Buddhist. Is the definition of "transferring merits" really so simple? Shifu's explanation is so human:

“After one deeply understands, one changes his or her way of thinking while also helping others; this is the meaning of transferring merits.” Such an explanation is in line with the Dharma and makes sense in scientific terms.

Investigating suffering and happiness, experiencing Dharma joy

Buddhism teaches about leaving suffering behind and attaining happiness. When I first learned about Buddhism, I asked myself, “Is life a suffering? Is there more pain than joy in life?” Later, when I came across the Buddhist phrase “to be filled with Dharma joy,” it got me thinking: “Isn’t life a suffering according to the Buddha’s teaching? So, is life suffering or happiness?” This question lingers in my mind. One day, I asked Shifu the question after we had eaten together. Actually, Shifu answered me right away, but I can’t remember what he said. Perhaps at the time it was my attachment to a biased, preoccupied thought that there was no answer to this question that prevented me from benefiting from Shifu’s answer.

But as time went on, I came to understand that giving is always rewarded. Some others described how they had changed as a result of participating in certain events, and I could truly see their changes. Since I also had experienced progressive changes at the same time, I could actually relate to it. Sharing the Dharma with others can help them regard their painful experiences from a new angle and correct their unhappy thoughts. This kind of realization is like seeing a light in a dark room, and it is incredibly delightful. Maybe this is what is meant by “to be filled with Dharma joy.” In the past, I used to feel bored and lost when I was quiet. But these restless feelings and doubts about life vanished after practicing the Dharma. I’m even happy in the quiet and more certain of my future life path. I’m not sure if this is Dharma joy, but whenever I remain quiet, I feel calm and at ease.

I was attending a training in Taichung when I first saw the adages: “Those who work hard must endure complaints, and those who do things must encounter criticism; there is mercy under complaints, and jewels hidden in criticism,” and they moved and inspired me

because they are so applicable to dealing with people and things regarding monastic affairs and in daily life as well. There had been Dharma brothers and sisters who had occasionally offered their advice and viewpoints in the hopes that we would adopt them for the benefit of the monastery. I therefore had to get used to listening and embracing other voices, sometimes even negative criticisms or resentments. I think that similar situations will exist everywhere there are humans. So learning how to be an open-minded convener is a huge challenge. But isn't this a chance for us to train ourselves along the way? Isn't it normal for a monastery's operations to have ups and downs rather than always running smoothly?

Enhancing monastery functions, inspiring more people

Shifu said that he frequently traveled to Hong Kong because the people on the Chinese mainland really need the Dharma now that their economy is booming following tremendous changes. Furthermore, given China's large landmass and population, Shifu hoped that Hong Kong

may serve as a bridgehead for spreading the Dharma to China. So he intended to draw more followers in Hong Kong and develop it into a hub. This is Shifu's great vow, and we're always working on it.

Shifu's adage that "To benefit others is to benefit ourselves" is one I've always believed because I've seen it play out in my own life over the years. Every time we organize an event, we want people to come and join us. However, we must first put in effort in our cultivation, with more personal experiences. For instance, a convener must first comprehend and experience the benefits of taking part in Dharma functions before they can share with others, in a more convincing way.

My own experience comes from taking part repeatedly. On the surface, it may appear that I was assembling a team to organize events, but I was actually the one who benefited the most. This is a mutually beneficial loop. We benefit the most by helping and serving others; sometimes we even reap much more than what we sow.

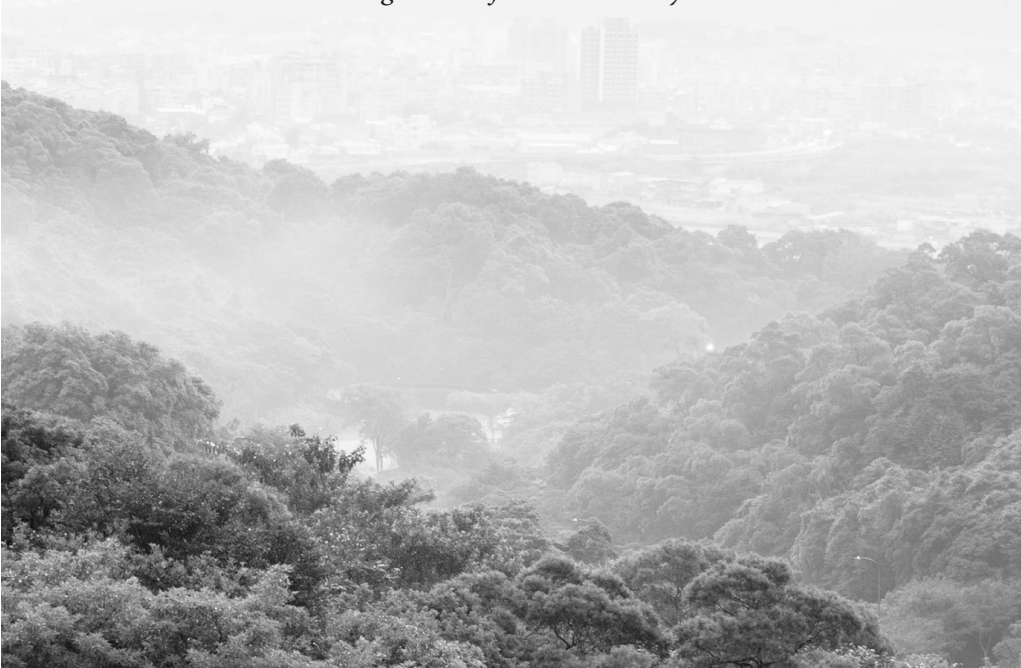
Gratitude for His Kindness and Recognition

Chen Bonan

During all this time, I never heard of or felt that Shifu had done anything violating the principle of Buddhist practice.

He was consistently conscientious, with or without the presence of others; he practiced what he preached. And, he made a compassionate vow, and had a far-reaching vision.

In this lifetime, I got to meet this excellent teacher, and won his recognition. I felt so touched by that.



Introducing the Speaker

Chen Bonan

In October 1996, he became a member of Dharma Drum Mountain's 11th Chan Retreat Camp for Prominent Professionals. After the retreat, he returned to Hong Kong and helped the DDM Hong Kong Liaison Office to register as a limited company. The next year, he again registered it as a NGO based in Hong Kong. In 1997, he took over the position as the convener of the Hong Kong chapter (later the Dharma Drum Mountain Hong Kong Centre).

He has worked as lawyer, legal consultant, and at the management level for the Emperor Group. Currently he is the chair of the Hong Kong Securities Association, and the vice-chair of the Success Universe Group.

Master Sheng Yen, my shifu, had his solemn and serious side, his kind and friendly side, as well as his funny and humorous side. He was my teacher, but was also like my friend, my brother, and my father. In my mind, he was a well-rounded master.

In early 1980, when I had only just entered university, I was still a Catholic. At the time I had many question marks in my mind. I often asked myself, “If the Lord truly has great love, and is omnipotent, then why is there still so much evil and pain in the world?” Some say, “Our heavenly father has his own plan.” But what kind of plan is that? And there was one more thing I couldn’t understand: Both Catholicism and Protestantism deny the idea of cyclic existence, hold that all humans have original sin, and believe that after death, one either ascends to the heaven or descends into the hell. The key to either ascending to the heaven or descending into the hell lies in whether one is baptised or not. According to their belief, if one is baptised and hasn’t done any evil, then they can ascend to the heaven; but, on the other hand, if one isn’t baptised, even if they haven’t done any evil, they will definitely descend

into the hell, or inferno. I studied law at university, so I found this statement unpalatable. And then, later when I had the opportunity to come into contact with Buddhism and discovered the concepts regarding the cyclic existence, the principle of causes and conditions, and the law of cause and effect, I totally accepted them right away. You reap what you sow; your karmic blessings are controlled in your own hands. The karma we have accumulated represents our actions performed in past lifetimes. The Dharma is truly scientific, and logical.

My vajra master agreed, and sent me to learn with Shifu

How the cause and condition emerged was really interesting, and occurred in a totally unexpected manner. In 1996, I saw a leaflet at a vegetarian restaurant in the UK, about a Tibetan lama who was going to hold an “Eight Prohibitions Dedicated to the Guanyin of a Thousand Arms and Eyes” in Hong Kong. Actually, at the time I had completely no idea what it was all about, because I wasn’t a Buddhist yet and I hadn’t attended any event of this kind.

Nonetheless, this message really got my attention, and I believed that it must be something solemn, so I decided to sign up. At that time I was still a Catholic, but since my childhood whenever I had heard the sound of “Guanyin” I would find it very familiar. I also often gazed at statues of Guanyin Bodhisattva with joy. For example, I would try to find out what material they were made of, whether it was white porcelain or bronze, and the style of their pattern design. To sum up, whenever I saw a statue of Guanyin Bodhisattva, I would feel delighted and joyful. As to the Great Compassionate Dharani and the great six-syllable mantra, among other dharanis originated from Sanskrit texts, I might not understand their meaning, but I was always happy to hear and listen to them, and I didn’t know why.

During the Dharma assembly of the Eight Prohibitions, I noticed two Dharma brothers who really stood out from others: one sitting opposite me, and the other one sitting next to me. Throughout the assembly we were supposed to remain silent, so I didn’t get to ask questions to the Dharma brother sitting opposite me, hoping that he would recommend some books for me. And he recommended

the *Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*. At the time only the English version was available, the Chinese translation edition didn't come out until later. In the end, something that I had never expected happened: after having read the whole book, I found myself suddenly able to quickly understand any Buddhist sutra I got to read, whether about Tibetan Buddhism or Chinese Buddhism. The book mentioned that every practitioner should have a vajra master, but I didn't think the master with whom I took the Three Refuges should become my vajra master, because I didn't feel it. Later, I consequently met several other Dharma teachers, but I didn't think any of them should be my vajra teacher either. It went on like this for a while, before I finally got the opportunity to become a disciple of the Karma Kagyu school. Afterwards, my vajra master came to Hong Kong to spread the Dharma. He spoke English, and I helped translate it into Cantonese. That time, in his Dharma talk he mentioned quite a lot of difficult Buddhist special terms. But, as soon as he mentioned them, I was able to immediately understand their meaning. It was really amazing.

So, when I started to learn about Buddhism, I practiced the Tantra tradition, though most of the time my vajra master wasn't in Hong Kong. At the time I would really like to learn sitting meditation, but there weren't many opportunities for that. But in July or August of the same year, I came across a message in a newspaper or magazine, with information about Dharma Drum Mountain's three-day Chan Retreat Camp for Prominent Professionals, entitled "Three Thousand Realms in A Single Thought-moment". What impressed me the most was that with the message there was a photo of a Buddhist monk, with a solemn appearance that signified how good his practice must be, and so that prompted me to attend. But according to the rules in the Esoteric Buddhist tradition, if the practitioner wants to learn a second method of practice, they are required to get the permission from their vajra master. Therefore, I sent an email to my vajra master in this regard, and I never expected that he would reply so quickly: the answer was positive. So he gave me the permission to follow Master Sheng Yen to study. I am really grateful to him for allowing me to become Shifu's disciple.

Meeting the author of the *Correct Buddhist Belief*

The first Buddhist book I read is the *Correct Buddhist Belief*. I am really grateful for that. If it had not been for the book, I would not have come into contact with Buddhism. While reading the *Correct Buddhist Belief*, I often felt that behind those words must be a compassionate and kind elder or wise person, using a Q-and-A format to present the essential ideas of the Buddhist teaching. The questions mentioned in the book were all what I had wanted to ask, and the way he answered the questions, as well as the content in his answers were plain yet practical, without a hint of showing off or trying to make it look mysterious. After reading the answers found in the book, I heard a voice in my mind, “Exactly. That’s what the Buddhist teaching is supposed to be.”

Unlike some religions or sects that often overly put an emphasis on their own masters, this book had a content that flows naturally and speaks to our daily life. The author didn’t want to show off his learning, so it gives

people a nuanced feeling; and you don't particularly want to guess who might be its author. I read this book about 30 or 40 years ago. At the time I didn't pay attention to who the author was. It was not until later when I attended Dharma Drum Mountain's three-day Chan Retreat Camp for Prominent Professionals that I suddenly realized that Master Sheng Yen was the author of the *Correct Buddhist Belief*. So the cause and condition was indeed unbelievable.

I really benefitted a lot from the three days of Chan practice. It allowed me to realize that sitting in meditation is not so complicated. Shifu never said that sitting meditation was sophisticated—it all depends on how we practice. He taught us to focus on two key points: First of all, you must warm up; secondly, you need to release the qi afterward. That is, having finished the sitting, you need to massage yourself to release the qi before leaving the cushion. As simple as that! But actually these two steps are crucial. Before that, I had read books about sitting meditation, which said that after the silent sitting, you need to guide your inner qi to operate and move in a certain way. But Shifu taught that instead of intentionally

guiding your qi, you should just observe how you are breathing. This was certainly a breakthrough to me, and I found it very beneficial. Also, Shifu shared about the state of lightness and calmness that may happen during the sitting, as well as other conditions and sensations that can possibly happen. Of course, this is all personal, and it differs from person to person. But at least it is a point of reference. Shifu used his “finger” to “point to the moon”, but it just represents a direction, or a goal. In the end we still must work hard ourselves, and practice repeatedly.

Following Shifu’s instruction to support the Dharma center

When I was at university, I read Buddhist books and learned sitting meditation, including the Taoist way and Indian Yoga, though I didn’t attain much realization. During the three-day retreat, I felt I had become a different person. I was very grateful to Shifu, and wanted to do something to give back. So I followed Shifu’s instruction: as soon as I returned to Hong Kong, I immediately head for Dharma Drum Mountain’s Hong Kong liaison office.

That was a small unit, as a venue for group practice. But I didn't expect that some tricky problem would happen right at that point of time.

At the time the location of the liaison office originally belonged to a Dharma sister who kindly lent it to us. Later, she needed to sell it, and so had to take it back, along with a very tall statue of Guanyin Bodhisattva enshrined there. The statue was borrowed, so we had to give it back too. The scene that day was really unforgettable. I saw how our Dharma brothers and sisters felt so helpless, and some elderly practitioners had a worried expression on their face. I had no idea what I could do to be of help. Later, when again I had the opportunity to attend an event, I was blessed with an idea that suddenly came to me: I was a lawyer, so maybe there was one thing I could do to help. At the time, the liaison office still didn't have a company structure; it only operated like a study group. So I immediately went about making it into an organization as a company, applied for a tax exemption, so that afterwards we could use the tax exemption receipt to raise money. This was the small contribution I could do in my capacity of expertise.

After struggling with the issue of the venue for a while, finally our Dharma-sister Liang Suhua decided to get a bank loan to purchase a place, and then leased it to the liaison office for next to nothing. And for the application I proposed regarding its organizational structure, within half a year it also qualified tax-exemption. Thus, the Hong Kong liaison office officially became a NGO. However, in the initial stage, I really found it challenging: our original convener Ms Chiu had a health issue, and our Dharma center suddenly had to put things already planned to a halt. So many problems were tangled together. So what did we do? At the time I never expect that I would be the one who was to take up the mission as the convenor. But because I was actually designated by Shifu for the task, I had to take on this heavy responsibility, even though I wasn't really prepared.

Because our liaison office was tiny, with limited space available, so when it came to organizing events or activities, what we usually did was prostrating to the Buddha. But Dharma Drum Mountain is a Dharma center for Chan practice, and Shifu was a great Chan master, so we really

wanted to organize Chan practice activities to attract more people to come. So what did we do? Since we didn't have the money to rent other venues, we decided to borrow places. In the beginning, we didn't have a clear direction, so we were frustrated. Later, someone suggested that we go to Elderly Venerable Chang Huai of the Buddhist Youth Association Limited for help. Now I cannot remember where the location of the association was exactly, but I have the impression that the place was not very big. It was full of books, and didn't look like a temple. It was more like a residential apartment or workshop. My visit to the elderly venerable was very pleasant. He was friendly and amiable, and didn't make you feel distant at all. As soon as he learned of our difficulty, he immediately promised to help. He helped us find a place at the Buddhist Wong Fung Ling College to be used as a venue. So that is how our Chan practice event we organized for the first time took place. The guiding monastic was sent by the Dharma Drum Mountain Sangha, who was carefully chosen and had to fly from Taiwan especially for the event.

Thanks to the right condition, the Dharma center relocated to Kowloon

Next, to raise the money and to make our activities more diverse, I thought of an idea: organizing a “Walking to Raise Money” activity. I can recall on that day many kind people came along. Among them there was a lady who drove her Ferrari and took her poodle along. At the time there was a prevalent myth: many believed that “It is difficult for the rich and prominent to engage in the Path”. But Shifu said that sentient beings are all equal, so whether you are wearing torn clothes or fancy clothes it doesn’t make any difference. All people are fundamentally equal, so as long as one is willing to come to a Dharma practice place, they should be welcome. If there are different voices emerging, that is just some personal psychological issue, not this new friend Ju Lixian’s problem.

As the convenor, I mustn’t boss people around or command people. Everything has to be done in a harmonious manner, and I tried my best. Gradually, Dharma sister Ju Lixian understood that we were a proper

Dharma center led by Master Sheng Yen. Besides regularly coming to our center to participate in group practice, she also introduced her husband Chen Tianming to Buddhist practice at our center. Not long afterwards, they decided to donate a place of theirs in Cheung Sha Wan, of some 6000 square feet, almost 10 times as bigger as our original place, and they also paid the cost for refurbishment and decoration. After our Dharma center relocated to the new address, we experienced a turning point, but at the same time other problems also appeared too. For many years, most of us participated in the group practice in Hong Kong Island, and now the liaison office was relocated to a factory area in Kowloon, many devotees therefore expressed resistance, making me feel very pressured.

In the beginning not many people came to this new venue, but as more and more Chan practice activities took place here, with monastic teachers especially coming from Taiwan to guide our practice, gradually we saw more and more devotees join our group practice. I am grateful for having such a wonderful condition, bringing Dharma Drum Mountain's foothold in Hong Kong to a new level.

Two beneficial Dharma-treasures for lifetime

Some 20 years ago, I met Shifu for the first time. Knowing that what I had learned for Buddhist practice was the Tantric tradition, he said to me, “In the Tantric tradition they have many mantras. So, here I have a ‘mantra’ for you, and that is the ‘Four Steps for Handling a Problem.’” At the time, my understanding of a mantra was that it must be in Sanskrit, but I didn’t expect what Shifu would say, that the “Four Steps for Handling a Problem” was also a “mantra”. Of course, I had doubt, and was wondering: Is this a play on words, saying that the “Four Steps for Handling a Problem” was also a “mantra”?

Nonetheless, during those years, what benefitted me the most must be these two Dharma treasures: Chan practice, and the “Four Steps for Handling a Problem”. Before that, my work had a nature of something like “detonating a bomb,” requiring me to have to deal with both the police and gangsters at the same time. In tackling urgent matters, I must know how to handle various

problems to do with the police and the gangsters as well. So reciting mantras alone couldn't help solve the problems. I had to consider how to face the problem, and mustn't dodge from it. Next, I must accept it. And how did I go about accepting it? That is to figure out what the problem is, by breaking down and analyzing its nature, before trying to look for the way to solve it. But, as I use some approach to deal with it, will it lead to another more serious problem? So I must always be cautious and have a clear thinking, because I cannot afford to use the wrong approach. In the end, once the result is there, it is beyond control, all you can do is let it go and stop thinking about it. For many years, no matter what problems and troubles I encountered, I always applied this attitude and approach to deal with it, and reminded myself of the importance of constantly engaging in practice and remaining aware and reflective. So, I have always been grateful for the Dharma Shifu had given to me. To this day, I still keep it in mind, and am constantly using it in my daily life.

The *Tibetan Book of Living and Dying* is indeed a very good book, and I find it greatly beneficial to me. But

its author later committed a very serious transgression, and even violated the law. This book is where I first got inspired by Buddhism, but later the incident made me confused and puzzled, because there is a gap between what the author said and what he actually did. Initially, what shocked me was: Can I still believe in such kind of Buddhism? But now I have thought it through. First of all, depend on the Dharma, not on a person. If the person explaining the Dharma isn't practicing the right path, then that represents his personal test, not the problem of the Buddhist teaching. Secondly, in our practice if we stress too much about supernatural power, or seek to possess the ability of supernatural power, that will twist the essential idea of Buddhist teachings. I remember Master Sheng Yen once said that supernatural power isn't the purpose of our practice. His enlightening words are a best reminder for my practice.

Diligent in practice, demonstrating Shifu's teaching

I had the opportunity to meet a great practitioner,

who was diligent, and down-to-earth in practicing the Dharma. No matter how advanced and how achieved his practice was, he was never full of himself and never forgot his initial aspiration. He represented a true bodhisattva manifesting in the world. During this not so short period of time, I never heard of or felt that Shifu had done anything that violates the principle of Buddhist practice. He was always conscious of himself, with or without the presence of others; he practiced what he preached. And, he had a compassionate vow, and a far-reaching vision. In this lifetime, I got to meet this excellent teacher, and won his recognition. I felt so touched by that.

Not long ago a Buddhist monk from Taiwan came to Hong Kong to give a lecture, with an intriguing topic entitled “The *Lotus Sutra*: The Power of Making a Change”. I heard that this venerable was very good at explaining Buddhist sutras. It has been a long time since the last time when a Guo-character generation monastic came to Hong Kong to give a Dharma talk on sutras, therefore I was interested. On the day of the lecture, as soon as I met this venerable, I suddenly generated a discriminating

thought, because 22 years ago I had met him, and he hadn't made a good impression, though now he was a lecturer at Dharma Drum Sangha University. I admit that initially my attitude was kind of arrogant, but when he started his talk, I was totally convinced and humbled: my prejudice and misunderstanding toward him was wrong. In his lecture, he talked about one thing that touched me the most. Once a student monk said to him, "When we joined Dharma Drum Mountain, Shifu had already passed away, so we never had a chance to meet Shifu. But we hope that by interacting with people who have met Shifu before, we get to witness Shifu's legacy." The venerable said that conversation served as a reminder and encouragement to him. So he had made up his mind that he should put in more effort to practice the Dharma, so as to better illustrate and demonstrate Shifu's teaching and ideals when it comes to giving lessons or lectures.

The way Shifu explained sutras was deep but easy to access, and he made it relevant to our daily life, without making it sound too hard to understand. And so was this venerable, who indeed allowed people to feel Shifu's

style. She was Ven. Guo Kai. When Ven. Guo Kai gives a Dharma talk, you will feel as if she is a handsome Kung-fu master, who is able to deal with whatever your attacks without feeling overwhelmed. When explaining the *Lotus Sutra*, she cited the *Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva Sutra*, the *Heart Sutra*, and the *Diamond Sutra*, among other Buddhist scriptures. Only with the ability of eloquence and a profound knowledge of Buddhist canon can one give a lecture that reveals the taste of Dharma characteristic of Shifu's Dharma talks.

Sowing seeds in the past that have grown into lush green

It has been more than a decade since I left the Dharma center in Hong Kong. When I returned, I discovered that it was flourishing. For a big tree spreading out branches and leaves, if its trunk is frail and weak, then you cannot expect its branches and leaves to grow lush and green. This represents that its headquarters in Taiwan has developed strong enough, and so its Hong Kong branch center has received sufficient nutrition and nourishment. This is

very important. Shifu died more than 10 years now, and Dharma Drum Mountain as a big tree still stands strong, because Shifu certainly had grown its roots deep enough so that now it has flourishing branches and blossoming flowers all over.

In recent years, on invitation of Ven. Chang Zhan, director of Dharma Drum Mountain Hong Kong Centre, I have been helping with the courses offered by the Merit-Field Program. I witnessed over 200 members, of various age groups, coming from far and wide, with different backgrounds, as well as many supporting volunteers helping with the courses. This is something that I have never seen before. Shifu made such an effort in sowing the seeds, and now that one seed has sprouted, developed, and grown into a prosperous tree. To me, that represents a Dharma joy that I have never experienced before, Our Dharma center is very organized and run systematically. How we introduce people to the Dharma is also very clear, with everywhere showing the correct Buddhist teaching. I think this is very important. If the Dharma center lacks a correct ideal, it will not be able to sustain itself, and it is

dangerous too. Seeing how the residence monastic leads, our volunteers' action, and the devotees' attitude, as well as the stable and steadfast style of our Dharma center, I am so touched and want to praise it. So when the venerable asked me to come to help with the Merit-Field Program, I was more than happy to agree, and I think the privilege is mine.

Now my mindset is: as long as I have the opportunity, I will do it. Whenever I am asked to help with something as a volunteer, I will go for it. I hope I can share more of my personal experiences and how I have benefitted from the Dharma. At the same time, I want to share with more people what I learned from Shifu's compassion and wisdom. It is this simple and straightforward mindset.

Of course, I am still a "playful and lazy" person who often has to spend time dealing with both the police and gangsters at the same time. But whenever I see this place is so full of positive energy, I am always so pleased to contribute whatever I can do. Everyone should remember his or her initial aspiration, and repeatedly take up the

initial aspiration and make a joint vow: to help spread the correct Buddhist teaching throughout Hong Kong, Macao, and every corner of China, enabling more people to possess the beautiful power of positivity.

Contributing the Self for the Benefit of All

Chen Tianming

As Shifu taught us, by doing good more often, we can transform our karma for the better.

If I contribute my time, effort, labor, and wealth to doing meaningful things for society, I can attain joy of making a contribution in the moment.

If I want to change my fixed ways of thinking and standpoint in how to be a person and how to interact with others, the best way is to follow Shifu's direction and goal, while contributing to doing things for the benefit of the public in society.

Introducing the Speaker

Chen Tianming

In October 1998, he became a member of Dharma Drum Mountain's 14th Chan Retreat Camp for Prominent Professionals.

In 1998, he offered his factory space in an industrial building in Lai Chi Kok in Kowloon for free, and sponsored the payment for its refurbishment, leading to the establishment of Dharma Drum Mountain Hong Kong Centre (formerly DDM's Dharma center in Hong Kong). Later, he also took back other leased unites in the same building and transferred all of them to Dharma Drum Mountain, forming it into a long-term and permanent practice place.

In this world of so many people, there was a thin thread of cause-and-condition connecting me to Master Sheng Yen, allowing me to become his disciple and enabling me to re-examine the meaning of life.

And the person who helped connect this line was my wife Ju Lixian; otherwise, with the background of that time and space, no matter how wonderful the Buddha's teaching might be, there wouldn't have been right conditions for me to come into contact with it. After she took the Three Refuges under Shifu, whenever Shifu came to Hong Kong to give a Dharma lecture on Buddhist sutras, she would invite me to join her.

Driving Shufu to the venue led me to take the Refuge under him

In 1996, Shifu gave a Dharma talk on Buddhist sutras at the Queen Elizabeth Stadium for three consecutive days. It drew an audience of over several thousand people. That time, Shifu made a profound impression. Shifu was an extraordinary persona with a deep knowledge

and understanding of Buddhist teachings. The way he explained the sutra was lively and intriguing. Even if you are not a Buddhist, you won't find it boring at all. Listening to his Dharma talk was a most delightful experience. Shifu was able to get hold of the audience, creating a cohesive and harmonious atmosphere. The way he explained Buddhist sutras was very popular in Hong Kong, and this was my first impression of Shifu.

In April 1998, Shifu once again came to Hong Kong to give a lecture to explain sutras. I had to drive Shifu to the venue, because my wife said that it was considered improper for a female devotee to stay with Shifu alone for a car journey. It is best that a male devotee did that job instead, so I promised. The traffic in Hong Kong could be very congested, so to avoid coming late and affecting the following itinerary on that day, I made sure I got to the hotel Shifu was staying, and went upstairs to meet Shifu.

That day, Shifu was delightful and joyful, and chatted animatedly with me. All of a sudden, Shifu said, "Bodhisattva practitioner Chen Tianming, tomorrow

afternoon I will hold a Three Refuges ceremony at a Buddhist school. Why don't you also come join us and take the refuge?" At the time I had no idea what taking the Three Refuges meant, plus the fact that I already had a commitment on the very day, so I said I couldn't make it. Then, to my surprise, my wife suddenly said, "Shifu, why don't you give a Refuge Ceremony for him right now?" I hesitated, because I had completely no idea about the meaning of taking the refuge. Then, I heard Shifu saying, "It's simple. You two just kneel down. And you repeat after what I say, sentence by sentence. And that's it." Shifu was so friendly that you simply couldn't refuse him.

So my wife immediately knelt down, and I followed suit and knelt down as well. Now as I think back, this was indeed incredible, because it is extremely difficult to ask a Cantonese to kneel down. So I really didn't know why I was that compliant. I believe it must be Shifu's dignified composure and amicability that inspired people to feel a sense of reverence from the bottom of the heart.

So, we repeated what Shifu recited, until when he recited the precept of abstaining from intoxicating drinks, one of the Five Precepts, and then I said, “No way! I don’t think I can abstain from alcohol.” Then Shifu asked, “Why is that?” I said, “In the west, alcohol is part of socializing culture. I am the chairman of the Australian Chinese Association in Hong Kong. This afternoon I have already made an appointment with the Australian Consul-General, to discuss how to promote their red wine.” Then, after thinking for a while, Shifu said, “Then you just skip this precept.” But, nonetheless, Shifu reminded me, “Alcohol can intoxicate people, so it’s better to drink less of it. Eventually, you should try to abstain from it altogether.” So, just like that, I became a Buddhist.

I felt that was a special moment to me. That was to inspire more people to come into contact with Buddhist practice and make beginners feel less daunted, lest they reject it altogether. Shifu was really tolerant and very skillful as well. At the time, had Shifu instead said “Maybe next time. I’ll wait until you make the decision,” then I would probably miss the opportunity to see Shifu again in

the future, not to mention coming close to Dharma Drum Mountain. This was a key turning point. Had I missed that opportunity, it would be a totally different story for what was going to happen in the future.

After taking the Refuge, Shifu gave me a Dharma name, and said to me, “From now on you will be called Guo Ming.” Shifu wrote down my Dharma name on my refuge certificate and gave it to me. At the time, Shifu’s secretary Ven. Guo Chan said to me in a surprising tone of voice, “Bodhisattva practitioner Chen Tianming, please do keep your refuge certificate well. Shifu hasn’t personally written names on the refuge certificate for people for more than a decade!” I will always remember Shifu’s compassion and tolerance.

A visit to Nung Chan Monastery with two touching encounters

Shifu often said, “Buddhadharma is so wonderful, but so few people know of it and so many people misunderstand it.” And I was one who had once

misunderstood the Buddhist teaching.

Most Cantonese people have very traditional concepts, and I am no exception. It was until I met Shifu that I got to reflect on those conventional ideas I took for granted. Nonetheless, before I decided to commit to it, I asked about Shifu's style from my friend in Taiwan. Though they all applauded and praised him, I was rather obstinate and still had some reservations about him; I insisted that I had to see it for myself. So I decided to travel to the Nung Chan Monastery in Taipei, to see for myself.

In the blink of an eye, more than 20 years have passed. At the time I assumed that since Shifu was very famous in Taiwan, the Nung Chan Monastery must be a place elaborately decorated and packed with devotee visitors, and definitely with a magnificent Buddha hall. But in fact, Nung Chan Monastery was completely different from what I imagined it to be. It was modest and simple, and they didn't burn incense there. I could even say its Buddha hall was just a corrugated iron building. As I enjoy thinking critically, at the time two thoughts suddenly hit me: firstly,

this master was not as famous as people thought him to be, not with many followers, and so he must be in need of financial support. Secondly, this master was different: for the sake of protecting the natural environment, he didn't allow devotees to burn incense, and would rather give up a possible big sum of donation money. The latter was the answer, which made me feel very astonished, and was also the first thing that moved me.

As I walked into Nung Chan Monastery, a young monastic with a smiling face greeted us and led us into the Buddha hall. But, with no lights on, the Buddha hall appeared a bit dark. It was so empty, with nothing there, and no air-conditioning either. After worshipping the Buddha, the monastic led us to the reception and treated each one of us a cup of tea. I saw nothing more than a few tables and a row of books. While drinking the tea, I came across the second thing that touched me: the place might be a bit worn and simple, but it was quiet and clean, and had a pure and serene feel. They were certainly conscious about environmental protection, unlike most temples and the impression they give people. Later I learned that a Dharma

center with a correct Buddhist belief does not necessarily need to have fancy buildings as a display of splendor.

The three-day Chan Retreat Camp for Prominent Professionals starting me a new direction in life

Attending that three-day Chan Retreat Camp for Prominent Professionals organized by Dharma Drum Mountain marked an essential turning point for me to engage in Buddhist practice. In the fall of 1998, my wife wanted me to sign up for the three-day retreat, and I felt that the two of us might as well go together, because I had no idea what the event was for. My wife explained to me, “During the retreat, participants must remain in silence and abstain from using mobile phones and beepers. Only vegetarian meals are provided. And, the rule is that couples may not attend together.” So I immediately suggested, “Then I will not go, because these rules are impossible for me.” But she didn’t give up, and went on to say, “I will go too, but not as a retreatant. I will go there as a volunteer to help, because it is such a rare opportunity.” At the time I

was really clueless. I didn't know anybody there and I was ignorant about the rules, and so I was very resistant. But, my wife just kept persuading me, and even begged me to go. So in the end I decided to give it a go with a try-out mentality, thinking that if it really did not work for me, then I would leave immediately.

I was grateful for those four days, which signified an unforgettable journey in my life. Every day we followed a regular timetable: morning chanting, evening chanting, sitting meditation, listening to lectures, walking meditation, and prostrating to the Buddha. Apart from abundant, delicious three meals and snacks, they also provided late night supper. At the time Shifu was almost 70 years old, but he was still quite fit, and he taught us from the basic. He spent time with us every day, from morning to evening, illustrating and explaining for us the correct Buddhist teaching and the meaning of life, enabling me to become more convinced. Shifu was so learned in Buddhism, and made me firmly believe that for this lifetime I was on the right path by studying Buddhist practice with Shifu.

I listened to Shifu's explanation on sutras in focused concentration. He went deeply into the sutra, illustrating everything from "becoming" to "non-self" by giving a wide arrange of examples, including his knowledge on astrology and geography. That lesson on the Buddhist teaching benefitted me a great deal. For example, Shifu dealt with the topic of life and death. Actually in Hong Kong most people don't like to talk about the issue of life and death, because it is a taboo. But Shifu explained the idea very clearly, enabling me to truly understand the meaning of life and death. When there is birth, there is death. We don't need to be afraid of death that we must face one day. And, we cannot bring our wealth along with us. Life shouldn't be all about pursuing material wealth; peace and happiness at the spiritual level is true wealth.

My father started his business from scratch. He wasn't educated, and only finished three years at elementary school. When he was 13, he traveled to Hong Kong on foot from Chaozhou, his hometown in China, to work part time at a small factory, with a monthly pay of two Hong Kong dollars. Life was tough. He often taught me that we

must depend on ourselves for everything, because in the end no one can really help you. We need to work on our own effort. Therefore, I was never interested in religions, because I believed that I had earned everything on my own effort. At the time I was a 100 percent workaholic. For me, the most important thing in life was nothing but work.

It must be until I heard Shifu say that “there is nothing we can bring along except for our karma that always follows us” that I started to change my way of thinking. Most Cantonese people believe in the principle of causes and conditions, as well as the law of cause and effect, so I guess I was also influenced by that. Shifu taught us that by doing good more often we can transform our karma. And, our karma always follows us, not only for this lifetime, but one lifetime after another. The law of causality spanning the three periods is logical, not a superstitious belief. This was also a lesson I learned during the three-day retreat. If I contribute my time, effort, labor, and wealth to doing meaningful things for society, I can attain joy of making a contribution right in the moment. As to what I will obtain as the reward in the future, I am not really concerned

about it, because at least I have peace of mind for the present. So I have thought it through, If I want to change my fixed way of thinking and standpoint in how to be a person and how to interact with others, the best way is to follow Shifu's direction and goal, while contributing myself to doing things for the benefit of the public in society.

Afterwards, based on this way of thinking, I often took the initiative to share Shifu's teaching with people, benefitting self and others, and this made me feel very happy. I often say that attending the three-day Chan retreat benefitted me a lot. Firstly, I learned a lot. Secondly, the vegetarian meals they provided were really delicious. Thirdly, it was an eye-opener. Fourthly, it was free of charge. Shifu was a prominent Buddhist monk in our time. He led the Dharma Drum Mountain Sangha to organize Chan practice retreats. Oftentimes, for a few dozens of retreatants, he wouldn't mind asking more than 100 volunteers to help, working together to achieve a practice event that was well planned and organized, which was indeed laudable.

Maybe some people will be curious why doing so. Shifu wished to introduce more people to Buddhist practice. And, among those volunteers, there were often some famous people who were inspired by Shifu. My wife was also more than happy to clean the restroom. So I thought that infectious power was truly amazing, and wonderful. If I don't share this with people, I will feel I have failed Shifu's expectations and my own ideals.

Promoting three books for beginners and recommending the three-day Chan retreat

After the three-day Chan practice retreat, I returned to Hong Kong gratefully, hoping that I would be able to contribute myself to doing something for the Hong Kong chapter. At the time Shifu didn't give any particular instruction, but just said, "I have a group of lay disciples who are doing group practice in Wan Chai, when you return to Hong Kong you may want to go and have a look. Maybe there is something you can help with." He also said to me, "Simply do your best, but don't force yourself.

Just do whatever you can do to help.” So, as soon as I returned to Hong Kong, I immediately asked my wife to get in contact with the devotees in Hong Kong, and this is how I started my further connection with Dharma Drum Mountain afterwards.

From then on, I started to give books authored by Shifu to my friends, such as the *Correct Buddhist Belief, Questions and Answers on Buddhism*, and *Introduction of Buddhism*, the three books considered by many as ideal for beginners. Their contents are all about sharing and promoting the Buddhist teaching in its true sense, and can help correct many people’s misunderstandings regarding Buddhist teachings. At the same time, I also actively recommended my friends to attend the Chan Retreat Camp for Prominent Professionals. For the following several years, through word of mouth, it became increasingly popular for people to attend the retreat. Some of them signed up for the retreat after reading Shifu’s books, and some through their friend’s recommendation. My estimate is that during those years, I had introduced over 100 people to attending the Chan Retreat Camp for Prominent Professionals in Taiwan.

For this purpose, I also formed an advisory group in Hong Kong, whose members were the 35 practitioners who had attended the retreat. After returning to Hong Kong, they were all fully moved. So I thought I must create more opportunities for them to make a contribution, so that we could stay together and remain cohesive for the long run. Among us, Professor Pan Zongguang, President of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, became head of the group, and Professor Li Zhuofen, Vice-President of the Hong Kong University, was the vice-head, who was also a founding member of the Centre of Buddhist Studies at Hong Kong University. There were also more other prominent professionals from the retreat who were keen to give of themselves, and they certainly made a great contribution to the development of our Hong Kong center.

Realizing the Four Steps for Handling a Problem to resolve difficulties

Early on, Shifu travelled to Hong Kong to give lectures mostly at invitation of the Hong Kong's Buddhist Youth Association Limited. In 2002, the conditions were

right for our Hong Kong center to organize a key-note lecture by Shifu. At the time I invited four influential friends to join this effort, plus the more than 20 Dharma brothers and sisters from our center working together for the preparation, to facilitate its planning to be more concrete and materialize. We arranged Shifu to stay at the Shama Tsim Sha Tsui Hong Kong Hotel, and held a press conference ahead of the lecture. Through our friends in the media circles, we introduced Shifu to be known by people of various walks of life in Hong Kong. At the time, the *Ming Pao Daily News* was planning a special article about Shifu's visit. The lecture was a great success. So from then on, I finally had the feeling of participating in the support of Dharma Drum Mountain.

There were many things I didn't understand, so I often asked Shifu for advice. Shifu was indeed a person of great wisdom. He once said that each individual has his or her position in society. For example, it is the duty for a Buddhist monk to spread the Dharma and explain sutras for people. Everyone has their obligations. You just do what is in your capacity, and there is no need to force

yourself. Shifu also said that it might be good to contribute ourselves to a cause, but we mustn't let it compromise the harmony in our family. The prerequisite to contributing ourselves is to first make sure our personal career and family are settled. So, I have always upheld Shifu's teaching and guidelines for dealing with whatever tasks I do. To put it simply, it is about keeping a clear conscience and giving the best of ourselves.

Shifu invented a Dharma saying: Four Steps for Handling a Problem—Face it, Accept it, Deal with it, Let it go. I find it very useful; it can be applied in our daily life and at work as well. When encountering a bigger difficulty, I used to just look away and dodge it due to my fear. So I only picked smaller problems to handle. I was ignorant, not knowing that if we don't tackle a problem from its roots and just leave it unattended, after three or five years the problem will still be there. After learning about the Four Steps for Handling a Problem, I decided to change my mentality, by first facing up to the problem directly, and then starting to deal with it from the most challenging part. And it works! Next, I'll think of ways to deal with it,

and if I have no way of resolving it perfectly, I'll first put it aside and wait for the right moment to come, making it easier to be solved. In case I still cannot have it solved, then I just try to let it go. But I wasn't like that before. Every time I encountered difficulties, I would become irritated and troubled, and sometimes even lose sleep over them. Ever since I started to follow Shifu for Buddhist practice, this situation has improved, because I have practiced, and put the methods of the Four Steps for Handling a Problem into practice.

Refurbishing the industrial building to renovate our Dharma center

In 2002, Shifu led a group of 500 monastics and devotees to travel to China for a pilgrimage trip to visit Chan monasteries. For his journey back to Taiwan, he was going to stop over in Hong Kong. Since it was so rare for Shifu to come to Hong Kong, we certainly had to take this opportunity. So we arranged for Shifu to give a lecture at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. It witnessed an audience of over 1000 people, so it was a big success. Right

during this period of time, our new Dharma center was going to re-open, which was inside my industrial building. I believe that we must be the first example in Hong Kong to set up a Dharma center in an industrial building. So, to make it coincide with Shifu coming to Hong Kong, we decided to speed up the schedule with our work to refurbish the venue, hopefully finishing it before the set deadline. In the end, we finally managed to finish most of the job in time.

I can recall that evening, with Shifu taking more than 30 monastics and over 100 devotees to visit the place of our new Dharma center, and perform the sprinkling ceremony. It was just finished so it still looked a bit messy. Especially, the newly applied paint emitted a strong unpleasant smell, so it was not suitable for holding any activity there yet. Therefore I invited Shifu to first go to another room to wait for a while. I didn't expect that Shifu then said he would personally hold the sprinkling ceremony himself. I reminded him, "The diluted liquid has a strong chemical smell, not good to breathe in. And, Shifu, it may damage your health. So, I suggest not do it right now." But Shifu

replied, “No problem. I’ll preside over the sprinkling ceremony.”

So, Shifu led the monastics and the assembly to perform the ceremony, sprinkling pure water on every corners of the center. I understood that by doing so Shifu meant to encourage us to cherish this Dharma center, and I was grateful for that. Later, I learned that Dharma Drum Mountain had so far never witnessed an occasion where over 30 of its monastics gathered together to visit a new branch center and perform the sprinkling ceremony, not to mention that for the previous 20 years, Shifu had hardly ever presided over the sprinkling ceremony personally. This showed how Shifu cared about and valued Hong Kong.

Starting afresh, growing together with our Dharma center

After Shifu passed away, there was a period of nearly 10 years when I didn’t go to our Dharma center and attend any events or activities there, because during those years I had experienced many things that allowed me to learn a

precious lesson, prompting me to ponder maybe it was time for me to retreat and settle down for a while. Or I should say that I believed Shifu could understand my intention and so he shouldn't blame me for choosing to take a break. With changes in the causes and conditions, now I have the motivation again, and with twice as much faith as well. I believe our Hong Kong center will have a better and better future, because I can see a strong team of monastic teachers leading three generations of devotees to work together, and firmly feel Shifu's ideals being fulfilled here.

On the Buddha's Birthday in 2018, I sat quietly alone at a corner in the refreshment area at our Dharma center, and could feel how participants of the event on that day were all filled with joy in the Dharma. Whether standing in line, performing the Buddha-bathing ritual, getting food, or fetching tea, everyone was focused with their minds reined in, solemnly performing rituals in a most touching manner. This reflects Dharma Drum Mountain's style of practice. Most of the time I can feel this atmosphere too, but on that day, with several hundreds of people participating in the Buddha-bathing ceremony in an orderly and serene

manner, as if there was only one single person being in that space. For our practice we may not want to emphasize on the external form, but right at the time and place, I certainly felt its dignified excellence. This represents the result of multiple people working together, from sowing the seeds to seeing them sprouting into green. I am so lucky to be part of them, and words can't describe how I have benefitted from it and how much I have been touched.

For recent years, in addition to Hong Kong, wherever Dharma Drum Mountain needed me, I would strive my best to go for it, be it in Thailand, Australia, Croatia, or America, because it is thanks to the presence of Dharma Drum Mountain that I have become what I am today. Now, when Dharma Drum Mountain needs me to help in any way, I'll definitely do my best. If I could start this again, I wish I could have done more and better, to repay the kindness of Shifu, for his appreciation and recognition of me.

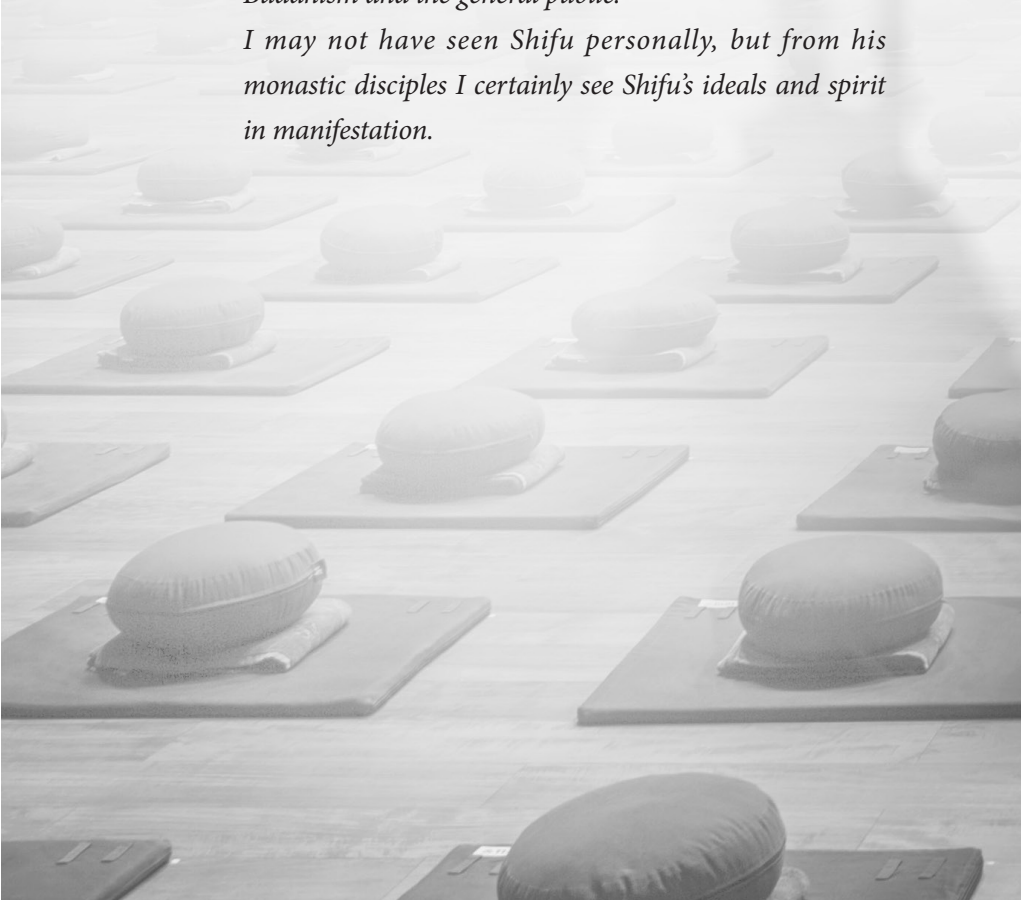
Seeing Shifu's Legacy

Huang Zhongjian

Frequent contact with the monastics resembles feeling a spring breeze on the face after winter time, a very special feeling as if I could see Shifu's legacy everywhere I am.

Shifu forgot himself while contributing himself to Buddhism and the general public.

I may not have seen Shifu personally, but from his monastic disciples I certainly see Shifu's ideals and spirit in manifestation.



Introducing the Speaker

Huang Zhongjian

He served as vice section chief of the Dharma-Youth Group, section chief of the Publicity Section, and vice convener at Dharma Drum Mountain Hong Kong Centre. In 2014, he took over the position as convener of the Hong Kong center.

In 2008, he came into contact with Dharma Drum Mountain for the first time by going online to search for the term “taking refuge” while in search of the meaning of life. In the same year, he took the Three Refuges; in the following year, he took the Bodhisattva Precepts; and in the year after, he attended the Awakening Camp and actively helped as a volunteer, reflecting how a young Buddhist in Hong Kong would engage in Buddhist practice. Currently he works for Hong Kong’s Social Welfare Department as a social worker.

I know many people who engage in self-cultivation of the mind. I may not be one of those who work the hardest, but I'm able to be with a group of happy "farmers" devoted to the same cause, sharing abundant results of spiritual harvest, which I am very grateful for.

Why are humans born? What is the meaning of life? These were the questions I was pondering since I was a teenager. I did not want to be a blind traveller while in search for a spiritual home for my wandering soul, but I had certainly experienced a process of numerous trials before I got to recognize and confirm the direction of life. I went to a Catholic primary school, and for high school I transferred to a Protestant church school. At university I majored in Social Work, and my school mates were mostly Christian. So as a matter of course I sort of became a Christian as well. When I was young, there were many things I still didn't understand. I just followed the tide and didn't think too much about the meaning of life. It was when I was 33 years old that the situation started to change drastically. At the time I was suddenly experiencing many things that went against my will and were not running

smoothly, so I began to feel bewildered and puzzled, and thus developing a strong and urgent desire to explore the meaning of life. But to my disappointment, I didn't think Christian teachings and doctrines could offer a satisfying answer for me.

Actually, it's not necessarily a bad thing to encounter low ebb in life, which may present an opportunity as a turning point for us to make a change. Once, while I was reading a Buddhist book about the *Heart Sutra* outside a vegetarian restaurant that put free Buddhist books at its gate, I was stunned by the words in the book. The author wrote, "Our suffering as human beings comes from our attachment to self." This statement hit my heart to the core, and interested me so much that I simply wanted to read on. For example, what is Buddhism all about? What is the essence of the *Heart Sutra*? How do we find the value of life? I discovered that this religion was really good, and could solve many problems. Curious as I had always been, I decided to continue my exploration in this area.

Searching for “taking refuge” led me into Dharma Drum Mountain

To become a Buddhist, the first thing to do is to take refuge. So I went online to search for the term “taking refuge”, and what showed up as the first entry was “taking refuge at Dharma Drum Mountain”. May 4, 2008 was a date I will never forget, that was the first time I went to Dharma Drum Mountain, the day I took the Three Refuges. My Dharma name is Huang Changsheng (“always prosperous”), at the time I was thinking probably it was because I looked kind of chubby and that was why the venerable gave me this Dharma name. But it was after I really engaged in Buddhist practice that I truly understood: it was all thanks to the causes and conditions that made it happen.

After taking the refuge, I started to read Master Sheng Yen’s books more carefully. How abundant and vast the wisdom and prajna that was! Gradually, I started to examine my inner doubts and puzzles at the time, and realized that the source of my problem was that I

thought I was intelligent and capable, with talent that was not recognized. After taking the refuge, I realized that I had a strong attachment to self, with a deep self-attachment. Shifu had done so many things for people and society, but not for his own sake. On the contrary, I was always concerned about how to get myself to be seen among a group of people, how to get approval, praise, and recognition from others. Now, as I think back, I really feel ashamed of myself. In the process of engaging in Buddhist practice in these years, I followed what Shifu taught us. I no longer just focused on myself, but learned to find opportunities to serve others. I have tried to reduce my selfish mind and resolve my deep-down self-attachment, so as to explore and fulfil the meaning of life.

Besides reading Shifu's books, I actually started by participating in group practice. Reciting the Buddha's name gives you a nice feeling. In the process of concentrating and focusing on the recitation of the Buddha's name, I felt that my tensed body and mind experienced an unprecedented sense of relaxation and stability. But at the beginning, I lacked self-confidence, because I didn't want

others to know that I was going to the Buddha hall to practice Buddha-name recitation. Back in that time I had a prejudice, regarding Buddha-name recitation as being something for elderly people, certainly not for someone just in their 30s. I was worried that I would be seen in a strange way, so whenever my colleagues asked me where I was going to on Friday evening, I would tell them that I was going to sing karaoke. I even tried to persuade myself that it wasn't telling a lie: reciting the Buddha's name involves a melody and rhythm, the Dharma instrument can count as a music instrument, and so chanting the Buddha's name can in a way be regarded as singing karaoke! At the time I just came into contact with Buddhism and knew little about it, still with many misconceptions. Now, I can confidently claim myself to be a Buddhist and share with others about the benefit of Buddhist practice and Buddha-name recitation. Being a Buddhist is a glory, because the Buddha's teaching contains infinite treasures.

About a year later, I told my parents that I had taken refuge in Buddhism. They were open-minded, and, although they were not particularly inclined to any

religion, they didn't reject or question my faith. They just noticed that I had started to act differently. For example, previously I would say a prayer before meals, but now I had changed to the ritual of making offerings to the Three Jewels.

Seeing Shifu's legacy from the monastics

Coming close to Dharma Drum Mountain, further into it step by step, is like digging up and exploring treasure: with every step forward you will discover new things, and the deeper you dig, the more you will obtain. Dharma Drum Mountain has infinite Dharma treasure. One cannot study and practice enough of it in this lifetime, and will find it inexhaustibly beneficial. I took the refuge in 2008, received the Bodhisattva Precepts the following year, and attended the Awakening Camp and a seven-day Chan retreat in the year after. Each and every event made me feel astonished and stunned. Previously my knowledge and understanding of Buddhism was very superficial, like holding three sticks of burning incense, with our mouth reciting something while praying to the Buddha, and no

more than that. It was not until I walked into Dharma Drum Mountain that I began to realize how wonderful Buddhist teaching was, something completely different from what I had imagined it to be. Listening to Shifu's talk on the Buddhist way to calm our minds, as well as the Buddha's compassion and wisdom, completely changed my impression of Buddhism. All the way down the road, I had felt so peaceful, stable, and at ease. I might not have the opportunity to meet Shifu in person, but through his books and video Dharma talks, the abundance and richness of their contents have certainly left a deep imprint in my mind.

Walking into our Hong Kong center again and again even made more differences. I felt so moved and touched, partly by Shifu's teaching and partly by other monastics as well. Attending different events, with frequent contact with the monastics, resembles feeling spring breeze on face after winter time, a very special feeling as if I could see Shifu's legacy everywhere I am. Shifu forgot himself while contributing himself to Buddhism and the general public. I may not have seen Shifu personally, but from his

monastic disciples I certainly see Shifu's ideals and spirit in manifestation.

One year, I attended a Compassion Samadhi Water Repentance Ceremony that I will never forget for life. At the time, the host monastic was in pain because he had some problem with an old waist injury. I saw him struggling with the pain while in the rest area. He even had to find somebody to give him a message, so as to be able to continue, just barely. But, during the Dharma assembly, whenever the monastic stepped onto the altar to host the ceremony, he performed the rituals as usual from beginning till end, as if nothing had happened to him. While standing, he stood tall like a pine tree; while kneeling, he remained stable like a bell; and while doing prostration, he bent like a bow. Even though the Dharma assembly lasted for quite a long time, he didn't show any sign of exhaustion or pain. Actually, he was completely different off the stage, as I observed all that. At first, I was worried; but later, I was so touched that I suddenly felt infinite respect and reverence towards them. Shifu and the monastics were all like us, with a physical body. But

why can they manage to forget all about their physical discomfort for the sake of sentient beings and their needs, unselfishly giving of and contributing themselves? This is what I admire the most in them.

Vowing to repay our teacher's kindness during the whole of my life

Besides explaining sutras and giving Dharma talks, Shifu also gave speeches or lectures, in an intriguing way. Sometimes he would act like a child, in a straightforward and pure manner. I remember once when we were watching a film, Shifu asked us a question: we have just finished the Chinese New Year, so what are you bringing me as a present? Some said that they had brought their “heart”. Shifu then said, “But I’m a vegetarian, and don’t eat meat. So what are you bringing your ‘heart’ for?” Suddenly, because of Shifu’s humorous and funny comment, the venue was filled with an atmosphere like Chinese New Year. Also, Shifu had a personal ability to transform the deep and profound Buddhist teaching into accessible words and language that is easy to comprehend. If we share

Buddhist teaching with people by using deep and difficult language, it is not going to work, because they may simply not understand it. Shifu was skilful in applying methods to introduce people to Buddhist practice. For example, Four Steps for Handling a Problem: Face it, Accept it, Deal with it, Let it go; or “Our needs are few, but our wants are many.” These expressions actually all reflect Buddhist teachings, and everyone can understand them, because they relate to modern people’s needs, instead of talking eloquently about Buddhist special terms and theories.

After taking the refuge, I would visit Dharma Drum Mountain’s official website every day to read about relevant information, which became part of my daily routine. In February 2009, on the day Shifu died, in the evening as I clicked to open the webpage, I noticed that its colourful front page had disappeared, and what I saw instead was black and white. It was about one o’clock at midnight. I gazed at the live streaming, without moving my sight away from the computer screen. In big rain, Shifu’s body was in the casket, being slowly carried from Dharma Drum Mountain Founder’s Quarters to the main Buddha hall. It

was late at night, so quiet without any sound around except the chanting of Amitabha Buddha's name. I knelt down before my computer, as if personally being there on-site, without any discursive thoughts in my mind. I said to Shifu, "In my life I didn't get to see Shifu in person. I feel sorry for that, but I have learned the teaching taught by Shifu, and so I consider myself lucky. I vow that from now on I will strive and work diligently, aspiring to follow Shifu to emulate the Buddha and deliver sentient beings in my next life, and even through many lifetimes and many kalpas."

However, my vow to repay his kindness has never materialized. I feel ashamed that while I have obtained so much, I still cannot repay his kindness. At the time Ven. Chang Kuan at our Hong Kong center said to me, "Throughout your lifetime, repay the kindness of our teacher." This suddenly awakened me. He said that if it has to be put on a scale to be weight, then no matter how much we do, we will feel that we are unable to repay the kindness of Shifu. So I made up my mind: from then on, whatever task the monastic assigned me to do, I would do it at the best of my ability; and if there was something beyond my

capacity, I would learn it—this is also what Shifu once said. Having adjusted my mindset, whatever tasks that needed me, I would give my best, and do my best. So during these years in the process, I have learned a lot.

In 2012, our Hong Kong center organized the Compassion Samadhi Water Repentance Ceremony for the first time, at the Buddhist Hung Sean Chau Memorial College. At the time the monastic assigned me to the overall planning and preparation. I promised, but was actually very scared, because I knew so little of it, and I hadn't participated in any Water Repentance Ceremony before, and had no idea where to look for the related information. Later, everybody worked together as a group like ants, and we asked the experienced for advice, about how to put Buddha statues in place, prepare the table with offerings, arrange the flowers and fruits as offerings, and decorate the venue. For the two-day Water Repentance Ceremony, we spent a lot time asking questions and learning how to go about them, and even sent volunteers to Taiwan to learn the know-how. We also arranged many video conferencing meetings. We didn't even know how to

do publicity, reception, and “cloud spiritual tablets”, so we needed to learn everything from scratch.

Like this, we followed Shifu’s guidance and teaching: whatever we didn’t know how to do, we went and learned it, so gradually we managed to piece up the whole picture. My motivation was simple, and the method was to keep on learning, and keep on asking question. As long as we are not afraid of challenges and difficulties, and just give our best and do our best, without having disputes about how much each of us should do to help, in the end we will learn and grow a lot, filled with gratitude.

Listen, smile, and care for others with energy

I am a social worker. That is, I work in service of people in need. I often say smilingly that “what come to me are mostly not very happy things.” That kind of mentality is actually not correct. Entering Dharma Drum Mountain and being slowly transformed by the Buddhist teaching enabled me to change my perspective on how I look at the

world. The way I looked at the environment was mostly its negative sides, and now I try to transform it into the driving force for me to strive forward. I enjoy my work, and so find it relatively easier to do the job. I apply the Buddhist teaching in my workplace, performing my duties devotedly, so after work in my leisure time I can undertake the tasks of Dharma Drum Mountain.

For example, before I took the refuge, when receiving the phone call from some client, sometimes I would feel impatient, thinking in my head, “That’s your family’s business. Why are you calling me about it so early in the morning? I’m a social worker, but that doesn’t mean I always have the solutions for your family affairs.” After engaging in Buddhist practice, I started to understand how to listen, and how to smile. In face of a client you are serving, if you can stay calm and wear a smiling face, this kind of response contains energy that has positive influence on others.

Now, when facing a client who speaks hurriedly and loudly, I can understand that this indicates they are

actually releasing emotions. So, I will gently tell them, “Slow down. I am listening.” By saying so, maybe it won’t work for the first or second time, but for the third time you will definitely see its effect. I discovered that when my body and mind was in a calm and peaceful state, my attitude and tone of voice will be different, and the other party can feel it, and so your following conversation will proceed more smoothly.

The Chan Buddhist teaching I have learned at Dharma Drum Mountain can totally be applied to my work and in my life. With Shifu’s explanation and illustration, the profound Buddhist teaching was made more relevant to our lives and easier to understand. I can’t talk about causes and conditions, causality, and the Six Perfections with my clients, but I can share with them, “Our needs are few; our wants are many.” Sharing this life philosophy benefits them. I remember Shifu once said, “To tolerate people, we can imagine ourselves to be a bottomless dustbin.” That is, while listening to the problems and troubles that bother them, we should remain unaffected.

After starting Buddhist practice, my mind became more calm and stable, and I was more able to attentively listen to others, and relate to other people's needs with empathy. Sometimes, a single word is enough to give people warmth and change their minds. I was thankful for how peace of body and mind can bring us power. For example, a mother complained about her daughter on the phone. On the surface, it seemed she was unhappy about her children. But I said to her, "It must be so hard for you. I heard what you said that you really feel tired and exhausted, having done so much for your family." This simple comment immediately made her feel that someone actually appreciated her effort, thus I was able to continue our conversation. This is how my Buddhist practice helped change my mentality.

Transforming the sense of shame into a driving force, sowing seeds in the merit-field

For me, Chan practice is a very good method of practice, and sitting meditation helps me calm my body

and mind. Every day I spare a certain period of time to be with myself alone. For example, after work, instead of going home directly, I will walk through a park or find a quiet place, being aware of my steps and experiencing how my body feels. This is also a kind of practice itself, which helps me find the method to calm and quiet down. Or, after lunch, I will sit on a chair to relax myself from head to toes, maybe for five or ten minutes, and that makes me feel relaxed and comfortable. Normally, after a whole morning's of devotion to work, we will feel both physically and mentally exhausted, as if our batteries are running low. But just a few minutes of sitting in silence and relaxation can replenish our energy. Reading sutras is also an ideal method. Reading out loud can increase our focus of attention. I like reading the *Diamond Sutra*, and I usually can finish reading it once within half an hour.

In 2008, I joined the group practice of Buddha-name recitation, but hadn't become a volunteer yet. I remember in 2009, on the Buddha's Birthday, I went to watch a movie. Afterwards, I learned from the *Buddhist Compassion*, a Hong Kong based Buddhist magazine, that our Hong

Kong center organized a Buddha bathing ceremony at my workplace. I felt so ashamed: I had taken the Three Refuges at Dharma Drum Mountain, but instead of going work as a volunteer on the Buddha's Birthday, I went to see a movie. So I immediately decided to go and get the volunteer registration form. After filling out the form, I immediately sent it back to our center. I transformed my sense of shame into a driving force, and started off from then on, hoping to become a volunteer for Dharma Drum Mountain as part of its efforts in sharing Buddhist teachings. To this day, I still remember my first task as a volunteer was at the transportation group. At the time I stood at the entrance of a Metro station, with my palms joined, to show the way to people wishing to head for our Dharma center. At the time I was really happy and content. From that year on, I have always been engaged in volunteer work for our Dharma center, without ever taking a break. And I will keep on doing this in the future.

Consecutively I also took up other tasks as a volunteer, including becoming the vice head for its Young Buddhist Group, as well as the head and vice-convener for its

Publicity Group. I remember at the time the head of our Young Buddhist Group was Yun Guohua. I learned a lot from her. Afterwards, in 2014 I took up the position as vice-convenor, till 2019. In the first year when I just became the convenor, I was very nervous, because I was supposed to help handle and coordinate many things. There were many things I still didn't understand, but I tried my best to learn them, and was also very grateful to the monastics for their tolerance of me in many ways. Whenever I made some mistake, they would remind me of that, and I would immediately apologize to people. I also thank them for giving me the opportunities to undertake those tasks. Five years is not a short period of time, but I believe that among all I must be the convenor who had probably made the most mistakes, apologized the most frequently, and gained learning experiences the most.

Benefitting self and others, a cycle of beautiful causes and conditions

From 2011 on, our Hong Kong Dharma center had its resident monastics, who led us to organize and hold

many activities and events. Within a short period of time, we saw the devotees and volunteers grow in number. This showed how people aspired to seek the Buddha-dharma and Chan teaching. Activities and events for spreading and sharing the Dharma are helpful for society, and resemble the ambrosial water and Dharma rain human minds in society need. After years of efforts, many people learned and knew about Dharma Drum Mountain. After attending the activities or events, some of them stayed and became volunteers, benefitting self and others, forming this cycle of beautiful causes and conditions.

I think the most important asset of Dharma Drum Mountain is the Buddha-dharma as taught by Shifu through his own internalization. Shifu liked to use a most plain and solid language to express its idea, enabling people to understand and accept. The most beautiful scenery at Dharma Drum Mountain is how devotees and volunteers have been touched by the Buddha's teaching in this manner, as revealed in their calm, peaceful gaze and their smiles of content and satisfaction. Encountering the Buddha-dharma enabled me to find the direction of life;

entering Dharma Drum Mountain helped free my life
from confusion and bewilderment.

Appendix

Dharma Drum Mountain Pocket Guides to Buddhist Wisdom
The books series already published:

- E-1 Meeting of Minds*
- E-2 In the Spirit of Chan*
- E-3 A General Introduction to the Bodhisattva Precepts*
- E-4 The Effects of Chan Meditation*
- E-5 The Meaning of Life*
- E-6 Why Take Refuge in the Three Jewels?*
- E-7 The Buddhadharma in Daily Life*
- E-8 A Happy Family and a Successful Career*
- E-9 Chan Practice and Faith*
- E-10 Establishing Global Ethics*
- E-11 Wu Ming Exposes Ignorance*
- E-12 The Buddha Mind, Universe, and Awakening*
- E-13 The Dharma Drum Lineage of Chan Buddhism*
- E-14 Master Sheng Yen*
- E-15 The Six Ethics of the Mind*
- E-16 Living in the 21st Century: A Buddhist View*
- E-17 Encounters with Master Sheng Yen(1)*
- E-18 Encounters with Master Sheng Yen(2)*
- E-19 Encounters with Master Sheng Yen(3)*
- E-20 Encounters with Master Sheng Yen(4)*
- E-21 Encounters with Master Sheng Yen(5)*
- E-22 Encounters with Master Sheng Yen(6)*
- E-23 Encounters with Master Sheng Yen(7)*
- E-24 Encounters with Master Sheng Yen(8)*
- E-25 Encounters with Master Sheng Yen(9)*
- E-26 Encounters with Master Sheng Yen(10)*
- E-27 Encounters with Master Sheng Yen(11)*
- E-28 Chan Practice—The Path to Peace of Mind*
- E-29 The Introduction to Chan Practice*
- E-30 Chan in Daily Life*

DDM Overseas Contacts

America

Chan Meditation Center

ADDRESS: 90-56 Corona Ave., Elmhurst,
NY 11373, U.S.A.

TEL: 1-718-592-6593

E-MAIL: chancenter@gmail.com

WEBSITE: www.chancenter.org

Dharma Drum Retreat Center

ADDRESS: 184 Quannacut Rd., Pine
Bush, NY 12566, U.S.A.

TEL: 1-845-744-8114

E-MAIL: ddrc@dharma drum retreat.org

WEBSITE: www.dharma drum retreat.org

Dharma Drum Mountain Massachusetts Buddhist Association

ADDRESS: 319 Lowell Street, Lexington,
MA 02420, U.S.A.

TEL: 1-781- 863-1936

E-MAIL: ddm.boston@gmail.com

WEBSITE: www.ddmmba.org

Dharma Drum Mountain Buddhist Association

ADDRESS: 90-56 Corona Ave., Elmhurst,
NY 11373, U.S.A.

TEL: 1-718-592-6593

E-MAIL: chancenter@gmail.com

Dharma Drum Mountain Vancouver Center

ADDRESS: 8240 No.5 Rd. Richmond, B.C.
Canada V6Y 2V4

TEL: 1-604-277-1357

E-MAIL: info@ddmba.ca

WEBSITE: www.ddmba.ca

North East Region

New Jersey Chapter

ADDRESS: 56 Vineyard Road Edison, NJ,
08817, U.S.A.

TEL: 1-732-249-1898

E-MAIL: nj_center@ddmba.org

South East Region

Atlanta Branch, GA

ADDRESS: 4036 Wetherburn Way NW,
Norcross, GA 30092, U.S.A.

TEL: 1-678-521-5483

E-MAIL: ddmbaatlanta@gmail.com

Tallahassee Chapter, FL

ADDRESS: 1310 North Paul Russell Rd
Tallahassee, FL 32301, U.S.A.

TEL: 1-850-888-2616

E-MAIL: tallahassee.chan@gmail.com

Mid-West Region

Chicago Chapter, IL

ADDRESS: 241 Holbrook Drive,
Wheeling, IL 60090, U.S.A.
TEL: 1-847-824-6882 / 1-847-875-9047
E-MAIL: ddmbackicago@gmail.com

North West Region

Seattle Chapter, WA

ADDRESS: 18670 NE Woodinville-Duvall
Road Woodinville, WA 98077, U.S.A.
TEL: 425-957-4597
E-MAIL: ddmbsa.seattle@gmail.com

South West Region

Dallas Branch, TX

ADDRESS: 2150 E Pioneer Pkwy #104,
Arlington, TX 76010, U.S.A.
TEL: 1-682-552-0519
E-MAIL: ddmbsa_patty@yahoo.com

Dharma Drum Mountain San Francisco Bay Area Center

ADDRESS: 255 H. Street, Fremont, CA
94536, U.S.A.
TEL: 1-510-246-826
E-MAIL: info@ddmbasf.org
WEBSITE: www.ddmbasf.org

Dharma Drum Mountain Los Angeles Center

ADDRESS: 4530 N. Peck Rd, El Monte,
CA 91732, U.S.A.
TEL: 1-626-350-4388
E-MAIL: ddmbsala@gmail.com
WEBSITE: www.ddmbala.org

DDM Toronto Centre, Canada

ADDRESS: 1025 McNicoll Avenue,
Toronto, Canada M1W 3W6
TEL: 1-416-855-0531
E-MAIL: info@ddmbaontario.org

Europe

Western Chan Fellowship

ADDRESS: Office 7511, PO Box 6945,
London, W1A 6US, UK (postal address)
E-MAIL:
secretary@westernchanfellowship.org

London Chan Meditation

ADDRESS: 37 Garden Road, Richmond,
London TW9 4NR, UK
TEL: 44-7826-566-535
E-MAIL: info@londonchanmeditation.
org

Luxembourg Liaison Office

ADDRESS: 15, Rue Jean Schaack L-2563,
Luxembourg
TEL: 352-400-080
E-MAIL: ddmbsa@chan.lu

**Chan Retreat Center Hartovski
VRH**

ADDRESS: Hartje bb, 10455
Kostanjevac, Croatia
E-MAIL: info@chan.hr

Thailand Branch

ADDRESS: 1471. Soi 31/1 Pattnakarn
Rd., 10250 Bangkok, Thailand
TEL: 66-2-0135651~2
E-MAIL: ddm_bkk2005@gmail.com
FB: www.facebook.com/ddmbathai

Asia

**Dharma Drum Mountain
Malaysia Center**

ADDRESS: No. 9, Jln 51A/225A, Zon
Perindustrian PJCT, Seksyen 51A, 46100
Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia
TEL: 60-3-7490-2298
E-MAIL: admin@ddm.org.my

**Dharma Drum Mountain Hong
Kong Center**

ADDRESS: 2/F., Block B, Alexandra
Industrial Building 23-27 Wing Hong
Street, Lai Chi Kok, Kowloon, Hong
Kong
TEL: 852-2865-3110
E-MAIL: info@ddmhk.org.hk

Singapore Branch

ADDRESS: 146B Paya Lebar Road#06-01
ACE Building, Singapore 409017
TEL: 65-6735-5900
E-MAIL: ddumsingapore@gmail.com

Oceania

Sydney Chapter

TEL: 61-466-597-663
E-MAIL: info@ddm.org.au

**Dharma Drum Mountain
Melbourne**

ADDRESS: Unit 1/ 38 McDowall Street
Australia VIC Mitcham, Victoria 3132,
Australia
TEL: 61-470-690-911
E-MAIL: contact@ddmmelbourne.org.
au

What I am unable to accomplish in this lifetime, I vow to push forward through countless future lives; what I am unable to accomplish personally, I appeal to everyone to undertake together.

– Master Sheng Yen (1930-2009)