The Dharma Drum Lineage *of* Chan Buddhism

Inheriting the Past and Inspiring the Future

Master Sheng Yen

CONTENTS

Introduction

07 **My Commitment and Life's Mission**

11 **Inheriting the Past and Inspiring the Future**

27 **The Dharma Drum Lineage of Chan Buddhism**

89 *About the Author : Master Sheng Yen*

91 *Appendix*

Introduction

This booklet is a compilation of six discourses delivered by Master Sheng Yen over a two-year period to his monastic Sangha at Dharma Drum Mountain in Taiwan. They have been collected and published here because of their historical importance. They include the Master's vision of the mission of Dharma Drum, and clarify the origin, purpose, and aim of his newly established Dharma Drum Lineage of Chan Buddhism.

Four recorded talks appear in this booklet in their entirety; these were delivered on September 23 and 24, and October 7 and 21, 2004. Excerpts from two additional discourses were added to form this booklet. The first appears here as "My Commitment and Life's Mission," from a talk given in the latter part of April, 2006; the second appears as "Inheriting the Past and Inspiring the Future," and it comes from a talk given at a retreat at Dharma Drum Mountain on February 21, 2006.

Three monastic disciples, Guo Che, Guo Jian, and Chang Yan, edited this booklet in July, 2006 in Chinese. Mr. Wee Keat Ng prepared the initial English translation. Guo Gu edited, retranslated and added the footnotes, which version was edited in English by Harry Miller and David Berman.

During the long illness preceding his death in February, 2009, Master Sheng Yen made significant preparations to secure the long-term health of the institutions he founded, and to clarify and contextualize his many contributions to our understanding of the teachings of Chan. The talks presented here were a part of those efforts; it is our hope that the teachings they contain will serve as a principle guide for the Dharma Drum Lineage to spread the wisdom and compassion of Chan Buddhism in the world.

My Commitment and Life's Mission

People often criticize Chinese Buddhism for its lack of systemization in doctrine and practice. They further criticize it as contrary to the teachings of the *Āgamas* and Madhyamaka[1]. As a result, many Chinese Buddhists are even reluctant to study Chinese Buddhism in a serious manner. But such criticism has its origin in a poor and incomplete understanding of Chinese Buddhist history, doctrine, and practice. If Chinese Buddhism really lacked order and coherence, how has it flourished for over two thousand years?

I have devoted my whole life to the study of Chan, Pure Land, vinaya (Buddhist codes of conduct), and even esoteric Buddhism. My studies have not simply been an idle accumulation of facts. Rather, I study buddhadharma for the sake of actualizing it; I study Indian and Chinese forms of Buddhism for the sake of making them relevant to a modern society, so people today will have the opportunity to understand, appreciate, and use the wisdom of buddhadharma. This is my commitment and life's mission.

All forms of the buddhadharma have a single flavor—the flavor of liberation. Indian and Chinese Buddhist masters have studied, practiced, and actualized buddhadharma and transmitted their wisdom and experience down to us through their writings. Their words nourish us. Because I am Chinese, I value the received treasures of the Chinese Buddhist tradition. I founded the Chung-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies for this reason. Our paradigm model is: "To be fully established in the Chinese Buddhist tradition, but to have a global vision for Buddhism as a whole." If we do not stand by our own received tradition, so that our words resonate with the wisdom and experience of untold generations, to speak of globalizing or modernizing Buddhism is simply unrealistic. How is it possible for others to respect us if we are unable to define our position?

Because the legitimacy and value of Chinese Buddhism has been called into question, some wish to modify it to accord with Indian and Tibetan forms of Buddhism. I have inherited the wisdom from the Indian traditions, and affirm the strength of Tibetan tradition, of course, but my foundation is built on Chinese Buddhism. The strength of Chinese Buddhism lies in its ability to absorb, embrace, adapt, and

adjust to the needs of people everywhere. I see the textual traditions of ancient Indian Buddhism and the contemporary practice of Tibetan Buddhism as reference sources for furthering the modernization of Chinese Buddhism. Some people use Indian Buddhism and other Buddhist traditions to judge and correct Chinese Buddhism. This approach can only lead to the death of Chinese Buddhism, which would indeed be a great loss to humanity and for Buddhism as a whole. Human civilization inevitably advances forward. There are definite conditions and logical causes in this process of evolution. If we attempted to somehow return to some "original form of Buddhism," then would we not have to abandon all the historical development of the various early schools of Buddhism that led to Early Buddhism and Mahāyāna Buddhism?

Excerpted from the preface to the Chinese volume, *A Reading Guide to the Four Treatises of the Tiantai School,* written in April, 2006

1 In contemporary times the reasons that Chinese Buddhism, and Chan Buddhism in particular, are judged in light of these two forms of Indian Buddhism are undoubtedly complex but can be traced back to the impact of Master Yinshun 印順 (1906-2005), the modern Chinese Buddhist scholar monk. For more information about his thought, see below. Only one of his books is translated into English; see Yinshun, *The Way to Buddhahood* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1998).

Inheriting the Past and Inspiring the Future

Dharma Drum Mountain (DDM) is an inheritor of the past and an inspiration for the future. People today have a strong sense of self; they have an overwhelming tendency to develop their talents in pursuit of their own ambitions. Of course, this kind of behavior will help ensure the continuity of society. But if such efforts totally break with the past, then they should not be encouraged.

In the sciences, innovation is usually achieved only at the expense of received traditions and perspectives. However, human history and culture are continuously built on the values of the past. It is a process of inheriting the past and inspiring the future. New paths are realized from the wisdom of our predecessors. This is especially true for Buddhists. If we were to disregard the wisdom of the Buddha and lineage masters to create a new form of Buddhism, then what we created would essentially not be Buddhism at all, but a new religion.

In September 2004, I delivered four lectures to all DDM monastics on the following topics: (1) Buddhism, (2) Evolving forms of Buddhism, (3) Chinese Buddhism, which is also referred to as the "Buddhism of the Han people," and (4) the Chan tradition within Chinese Buddhism. Moreover, I also spoke on the convergence of DDM Chan Buddhism with the modern world, making DDM Chan Buddhism a mainstay in mainstream global Buddhism.

After Śākyamuni Buddha's nirvāṇa, his teachings continued to evolve in India into the various schools of Hīnayāna Buddhism[1] and Mahāyāna schools of Madhyamaka, Yogācāra, and Tathāgatagarbha. "School" as used in this booklet does not mean distinct institutional establishment, but tradition of thought. From India, Buddhism spread and evolved into Southern Buddhism (i.e., present day Theravāda) in Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Myanmar, and Northern Buddhism in East Asia and Tibet. Over the course of its development in China, Chinese Buddhism further evolved into eight or ten schools, including Chan.[2] Chan Buddhism continued to evolve as well, but never strayed from the principles in the teachings of Śākyamuni. These principles can be found in such scriptures as the *Sutra of Dependent Origination* (*Pratītya-samutpāda*

divibhaṅga-nirdeśa sūtra) and the *Rice Stalk Sutra* (*Śālistamba-sūtra*). In these texts, there are important proof texts that define the essential message of Śākyamuni, one of which is: "To see dependent origination is to see the Dharma; to realize the Dharma is to see the Buddha." All the schools and traditions of Buddhism are contingent on the teaching of dependent origination. Perceiving the nature of dependent origination is to awaken to the path, and awakening to the path is to see the Buddha.

How did early Buddhist schools come to be? The original teachings adapted to a variety of local cultures and societies across Asia, each with its own needs, languages, and values. At first, there was nothing that was called either Hīnayāna or Mahāyāna. But the teachings evolved and became more distinct, and a variety of regional schools came to be known as "Early Buddhism."[3] Mahāyāna is said to have evolved out of one such school.[4]

Has Chinese Buddhism strayed from Indian Buddhism? No. It evolved naturally from both Indian Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna traditions. However, Chinese Buddhism—and the tendency of modern Buddhist traditions—gravitated toward

the Tathāgatagarbha school of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Because the other Indian Mahāyāna traditions of Madhyamaka and Yogācāra were intellectually and dialectically oriented, they could not have been established as popular and practical forms of Buddhism. These schools of Indian Buddhism will be discussed below.

How did Tathāgatagarbha teachings come about? In the *Laṅkāvatāra-sutra*, Bodhisattva Mahāmati asked the Buddha, "Why does the World Honored One, just like the non-buddhists, claim that 'there is the existence of the Tathāgata-garbha?"... The Buddha replied, Mahāmati, bodhisattva-mahasattvas of the present and the future should not construct notions of a self... this doctrine of Tathāgatagarbha is disclosed for the benefit of non-buddhists so those who grasp onto the unreality of the view of self can enter into the realm of the three gates of liberation."[5] This passage clearly states that the doctrine of Tathāgatagarbha is a skillful device to guide non-Buddhist practitioners. In creating something close to the notion of an atman (soul), the Buddha could then gradually guide them to realize the Tathāgatagarbha teaching of no-self or emptiness.

During the Tang Dynasty (618-907), when Chinese Buddhism flourished among the learned elite, there is no evidence of the conflation of Tathāgatagarbha with notions of a permanent self or Supreme Being. Perhaps practitioners then had a correct understanding and confidence in the Dharma. However, after the Song Dynasty (960-1279) and beginning in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), Buddhism began to weaken as a result of persistent challenges from and appropriations by Neo-Confucian scholars. The interactions of Buddhism and other traditions on many levels of doctrine, social relations, and practices caused enormous difficulties for its survival as a distinct religion. Fewer people studied Buddhism and fewer still had any real attainment. Hence, monastic communities and institutions became empty shells, and Buddhism secularized into superstitious folk beliefs. Until recent times, this was the state of affairs for Chinese Buddhism. Reacting to this, the influential scholar-monk Master Yinshun (1905-2005) wrote a critique of Chinese Buddhism. I, too, have lamented that, "the Dharma is so wonderful, yet few people know about it and many misunderstand it." People criticize the state of affairs in Chinese Buddhism; people misunderstand the wisdom of Chinese Buddhism. All of these stem from the lack of familiarity with and a deep misunderstanding of Chinese

Buddhism. Hence, many found it difficult to develop faith or confidence in the teachings and practices of Chinese Buddhism.

When Buddhism spread from India to China, the new teaching first had to be understood in the context of the indigenous Chinese teachings of Daoism and Confucianism. Buddhism initiated a cultural exchange that profoundly influenced the birth of the Neo-Confucianism of the Song and Ming dynasties. Chinese Buddhism gave rise to many traditions centered upon Tathāgatagarbha teachings. Chan Buddhism is the crystallization and condensation of the best of all the Chinese Buddhist schools, and it offers us an engaged Buddhism that is extremely relevant to contemporary life. The lineage masters of Chinese Buddhism skillfully drew upon Confucianism and Daoism to adapt Indian Buddhism to Chinese culture and society.

DDM takes Chinese Buddhism as its core and operates under the principle of "inheriting the past and inspiring the future." We have inherited the Chan tradition from Mainland China, but we are not bound by the remote "mountain and forest" cloisters of the Chan Buddhism of previous centuries.

That strain of Buddhism was not exposed to Theravāda and Tibetan traditions, and so could not have absorbed their strengths. However, I have personally studied these traditions, and also learned from other schools of Chan Buddhism in Korea, Japan and Vietnam. I have incorporated what I have learned into my own Chan teachings. Here are some examples of this.

When a Chan practitioner cannot derive power from the huatou method—meditation on a critical phrase[6]—I teach methods such as meditation on the breath, prostrations, walking meditation, or reciting the Buddha's name as auxiliary aids to their practice. When I was in Japan practicing in a Japanese Sōtō monastery, I used their method of shikantaza or "just-sitting," which in fact is an alternative name for mozhao, or silent illumination, of the Chan school. This was very similar to the method that I used during my six-year solitary retreat, a method that had disappeared 800 years before in China. Moreover, when I arrived in the United States, I encountered the gradual vipaśyanā (Pāli: vipassana) methods of the Theravāda tradition. I appropriated and modified these methods for use in the Chinese Chan practice in our DDM tradition.

Systematizing both Chan practices of huatou ("critical phrase") and mozhao ("silent illumination"), I devised a "gradual" approach within the "sudden" path of Chan practice. They are now effective and practical methods for practitioners of different spiritual capacities. I mapped out four general stages in Chan practice, from scattered mind, to concentrated mind, to unified mind, to no-mind or enlightenment. I also devised auxiliary methods that are useful at every stage of this path. These are the results of my many years of study, organization, and practice—all in the pursuit of the revitalization of the Chan tradition of Chinese Buddhism.

Some people believe that Chan rejects Pure Land practice. This is not the case with DDM. We incorporate much of Pure Land practice, especially the recitation of Buddha's name. I often encourage people in this practice, and have published a number of books on it. We at DDM not only hold seven-day Chan retreats, but also seven-day Buddha's name recitation retreats. Chan practitioners don't necessarily recite the Buddha's name, but at DDM we define four understandings of Pure Land practices: the present Pure Land of this world, the Pure Land of the heavenly realm, the Pure Land of the buddhas, and the Pure Land within our own mind or self-

nature. Thus the idea that we reject Pure Land practice is baseless.

The reason we now have a mountain site called "Dharma Drum Mountain" (DDM) is primarily because of my teacher, the late Master Dong Chu (1908-1977). In his will, he wanted me to establish an educational institute for Buddhist studies on a mountain site. The details of this can be found in my Chinese article "Shi'en nanbao" (The Difficulty in Repaying One's Gratitude to the Master).[7] Over the years, I have held fast to the principle of not mobilizing any human or monetary resources left by him. At the same time, I have tried to protect the properties he entrusted to me. Most of all, I did my very best to fulfill his wish to promote Buddhist education by establishing the Chung-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies in Taiwan. All of these posed great challenges for me.

I share Master Dong Chu's vision that "Buddhism has no future without Buddhist education." In the process of actualizing this vision, I insisted that all students and faculty members from the Institute would only need to concentrate on their research and would not have to mingle with lay supporters for fund-raising purposes or assist in any ritual obligations.

They also would not trouble themselves with any administrative work. I would take up this burden of raising funds from our lay followers to support the research work of our faculty and students.

This decision to free the faculty and students from these obligations might have seemed the correct thing to do at the time, but in hindsight it may also be interpreted as a mistake. For example, over the years this arrangement has created a gulf between members of the Institute and the monastic Sangha. Such a rift has led to many other related problems. I have to thank every monastic and lay disciple who has assisted and supported me in operating the Chung-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies for the past 20 years. My monastic disciples have been serving the needs of our lay supporters and have taken up various responsibilities in the development of DDM. I am indebted to all of them for the success of the Institute, which paved the way for the creation of the DDM World Center for Buddhist Education.

Still, while everything at DDM appears now to be well and in place, we should recognize that the path here was not without much difficulty. For the past seventeen years, I have

felt as if I were sitting on top of a blazing caldron. There were constant challenges that needed to be overcome and potential problems that needed to be preempted. In all this, my aim was to design new creative Buddhist programs that would keep up with the mainstream culture and that would better serve the needs of our society. If these needs were not filled and new programs not created, the prospect of DDM's future—and indeed that of Chinese Buddhism as a whole—would be bleak.

It seems that the infrastructures and buildings at DDM are quite impressive—they are simple yet refined, and blend naturally with the surrounding environment. Yet behind these simple buildings are years of overcoming difficulties in every aspect of the developmental phase, from planning, to designing, to material selection, to building the foundations, and to the different phases of the final construction of the buildings. Because we insisted on being environmentally friendly and adhered strictly to the "original face" of the natural environment, we consulted many professionals and visited many countries to learn about different architectural designs of premodern and modern buildings and temples. We could not have built the DDM campus without the help of numerous

experts. This is particularly true for some of the main buildings on the campus, such as the Main Auditorium, the Chan Hall, and the International Conference Hall. These buildings are the work of many architects and interior designers, who tried to accommodate my visions and principles for DDM.

I also had to work closely with members of the DDM construction project team on all issues relating to land clearing, foundation construction, and building completion over the past 16 years. We now have a built-up area of 25,000 "pings" (around 80,000 square meters). This includes the Education and Administration Building, Library and Information Center, International Conference Hall, dormitories for both male and female practitioners, dormitories for lecturers and VIPs, and even two units of underground water storage tanks. In addition to those buildings, the number of common infrastructures and facilities that are completed (some are still underway) include the main roads into DDM from the local town, all the roads on campus, nine parks and gardens, seven trails, three connecting corridors between buildings, and three streams. Beyond the existing Chung-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies on our campus, we also plan to build the Dharma Drum Buddhist College, the Dharma Drum College of

Humanities and Social Science, and the Dharma Drum Sangha University in the future. Ultimately, these will be consolidated into the Dharma Drum University.

In establishing these entities for Buddhist education, we must remember where we come from and where we should go. The Dharma Drum Sangha University, for example, includes students focusing on three different Buddhist traditions—Indian, Chinese, and Tibetan. The daily lives of these students, however, will be managed in accordance with the Chinese Buddhist tradition at DDM. It would be too complicated if we were to apply different rules and regulations for monastic students focusing on different lineages. The preparation of food alone, for example, would cause too many problems if we had to build different kitchens—one for vegetarian diet and one for non-vegetarian diet—to facilitate different monastic traditions (the Theravadins and Tibetans are not vegetarians). Such arrangements would simply confuse many DDM lay supporters. We could receive students from the Theravāda and Tibetan traditions, but because DDM is operated by the Chinese Buddhists, and most of its supporters are Chinese, it is important that we manage and operate DDM in line with Chinese Buddhism. I hope this principle is something we will

always safeguard and adhere to strictly.

I also wish to reiterate this point: in the spirit of "inheriting the past and inspiring the future," Dharma Drum members in the future should not remove or destroy any of the existing structures or modify them according to personal ideas or whims. All the buildings, space utilization, roads and landscapes were painstakingly designed and funded by all the generous supporters and me. These different aspects of DDM should be preserved, refined, and perfected for practical use. If this is not observed, we would not be "inheriting our past and inspiring the future." Instead, we would simply be denying our past and our lineage.

Talk given on February 21, 2006 for monastic sangha members at DDM

---

1 There are supposedly eighteen schools of early Buddhism, from the time around 100 years after the passing of Śākyamuni, to the reign of King Aśoka in the 3rd century BCE. The first major division was between the conservative Sthaviravādins, which later developed into the Theravādins, and the progressive Mahāsāṅghikas—the progenitors of the later Mahāyāna Buddhism. These two main groups further split into smaller schools of thought, distinguished from each other mainly by their variant interpretations of the Buddhist doctrine and the rules of discipline, vinaya. Accounts of the nature of this schismatic process, and the exact names and number of schools vary according to the source. According to the account of some Northern Buddhism the two main divisions branched into

twenty sub-sects, while texts from Southern Buddhism tend to claim they developed into eighteen sub-sects. Chinese Buddhism tends to follow the latter. For purposes of this booklet, the period of division of Buddhism into 18-20 schools will be referred to as "Early Buddhism." I use the word Hīnayāna as a generic term referring to a type of understanding of Buddhism.

2 See, for example, Akira Hirakawa, *Hasshū kōyō*《八宗綱要》. Tōkyō: Ōkura Shuppan, 1980-1981. An English translation of this work is available: Leo M. Pruden, trans. *The Essentials of the Eight Traditions*. Berkeley, CA: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1994. This division was already active at least as early as the twelve-century China. See Shengyan, *Yindu fojiao shi*《印度佛教史》(*A History of Indian Buddhism*) (Taipei: Fagu wenhua shiye gufen youxian gongsi, 1997).

3 See footnote 2 above and section 2.3 for more detail. The eighteen schools falls under two general rubrics: First, the Mahāsāṅghikā 大衆部 is divided into eight schools: 1) Ekavyavahārikā 一說部; 2) Lokottaravādina 說出世部; 3) Kaukkuṭikā (Gokulikā) 雞胤部; 4) Bahuśrutīyā 多聞部; 5) Prajñāptivadina 說假部; 6) Jetavaniyā, or Caityaśailā 制多山部; 7) Aparaśailā 西山住部; 8) Uttaraśailā 北山住部. Second, the Āryasthavirā or Sthāviravāda 上座部, which is divided into eight schools: 1) Haimavatā 雪山部, and this school gave rise to 2) Vātsīputrīyā 犢子部, which gave rise to 3) Dharmottarīyā 法上部; 4) Bhadrayānīyā 賢冑部; (5) Saṃmatīyā 正量部; and (6) Saṇṇagarikā 密林山; (7) Mahīśāsakāḥ 化地部, which produced 8) Dharmaguptā 法藏部. From the Sarvāstivāda 說一切有部 arose 9) Kāśyaḥpīyā 飲光部 and 10) Sautrāntikāḥ 經量部.

4 The Mahāyāna is said to have stemmed from the Mahāsāṅghikāḥ School because its teachings already foreshadowed many tenets of the later developed Mahāyāna. In general the rise of Mahāyāna was not a movement at all. Mahāyāna inclined Buddhist monastics lived side-by-side with so-called Hīnayāna monastics. For more information, see Paul Harrison, *Searching for the Origins of the Mahāyāna,* Eastern Buddhist 28 (1995): 48-69.

5 An alternative translation can be found in Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, *The Laṅkāvatāra Sutra: A Mahayana Text* (Colorado, Prajana Press, 1978), 69.

6 For further information on this method, see my *Hoofprint of the Ox: Principles of the Chan Buddhist Path as Taught by a Modern Chinese Master* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 118-138.

7 "Shi'en nanbao 師恩難報" was originally published as an article in *Zhongguo fojiao shi*《中國佛教史》; it is now included in the anthology entitled, *Daonian, youhua*《悼念．遊化》(*Eulogies and Travel Logs*), in *Fagu quanji* 《法鼓全集》(*The Complete Works of Master Sheng Yen*) (Taibei: Dharma Drum Corp., 2007), 9-36.

The Dharma Drum Lineage of Chan Buddhism

Religion → Buddhism → Chinese Buddhism → Chan Buddhism

Part 1: Religious Teachers of DDM Chan Buddhism

I wish to explore the following topics: "Buddhism as a Religion"; "Chinese Buddhism in Buddhism"; "Chan Buddhism in Chinese Buddhism"; and the "Chan Buddhist Teachings of Dharma Drum Mountain in Contemporary Society." In addition, I would also like to discuss the convergence of the Chan Buddhism as taught at DDM with current and future forms of Buddhism. It is my hope that all members of our monastic community would share the common understanding that we are religious teachers: teachers of Buddhism, of Chinese Buddhism, of Chinese Chan Buddhism, and members of the Dharma Drum Chan Order.

1.1 What are the Responsibilities of a DDM Religious Teacher?

What exactly do we do at DDM? What is our responsibility? Our main task is to practice and transmit Chinese Chan Buddhism, ensuring its sustainability in contemporary societies. That is, to render our services globally through Chan Buddhism's practical and living wisdom for daily life, irrespective of whether people wish to become Buddhists or not. Actually, this has been my endeavor over the years in both Asia and the West, and the results of my work have been good. I hope that this twin mission of practicing and transmitting Chan Buddhism becomes our shared responsibility and vision, something that we continue to cultivate.

I say this because I have discovered that members of our monastic sangha are unclear of our mission and role in society. This uncertainty comes from a lack of understanding of where we came from, our current situation, and our future prospects. To have these uncertainties is to be in a precarious and aimless state. Doubts and uncertainties lead to confusion. If we do not have a solid consensus, then as a community it is impossible to share a vision. This is a crisis for our communi-

ty and for the welfare of Chinese Buddhism. Since DDM monastics have all left the household life and have received our Buddhist education at DDM, it is crucial that we identify ourselves with DDM, and clarify our common foundation, our vision, and mission. Otherwise, we may easily change and lose our direction, or even give up our religious duties for personal gains and fame.

1.2 The Current Situation with World Religions

I would like to share some statistics in regard to world religions today, just so we realize where we stand.

There are, in the world today, approximately ten major religious traditions. The majority of the ten religions occupy just a small percentage of people. Statistics can always be debated, but supposedly the largest percentage of the world's population belongs to Christianity, including the Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and various Protestant churches, with an astounding two billion followers. Second largest percentage of the world's population belongs to Islam, with over one billion followers. Then there are the various branches of Hinduism with 900 million followers. The Buddhists only add up to less than 400 millions.[1]

Where are the Buddhists located geographically? There are about six million Tibetan Buddhists in India, Tibet, Mongolia, and Nepal. In Thailand, theoretically 98% of the population is Buddhist, the rest being either Christian or Muslim. In Sri Lanka, surprisingly, the Buddhist population is less than that of Christianity, despite our common assumption. In Vietnam, there are more Catholics than Buddhists. Countries with a higher percentage of Buddhists are smaller countries such as Cambodia and Burma. In Korea, Christians outnumber Buddhists. In Japan, though Buddhism appears to be more popular, with many Buddhist temples and universities, most people follow Shinto customs. Shinto was promoted with concerted effort by the government in the mid-19th century to be the "indigenous religion" of Japan. Hence, despite the many Buddhist universities and practitioners, the Japanese usually follow Shinto customs.

Now let's examine the situation in mainland China. There are not many orthodox Buddhists there, if by "orthodox" we mean those who have taken refuge in the Three Jewels (of the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha) and the five precepts. People who visit local Buddhist temples to offer incense or seek divine guidance from various fortune telling

methods (which are forms of local folk belief) cannot really be considered Buddhists. Common people who crowd famous religious sites generally have little respect for Buddhist monastics. Their common perception is that Buddhist monastics are of little value to society. Even when I have visited sacred Buddhist sites and important Buddhist masters, none of the visitors at those places were aware of the eminence of those masters. Naturally, they paid little attention to us as they walked past us on the monasteries' grounds. Their purpose at those monasteries was simply sightseeing or at most popular worship. For example, offering incense to statues of buddhas or other deities is part of the general Chinese religious custom. People who do this cannot be considered followers of the Three Jewels.

Currently the country with the highest percentage of orthodox Buddhists (out of the total population) happens to be Taiwan. However, even if all Taiwanese were to become Buddhists, the total number would only be a mere 23 millions. Just guess: How many registered Buddhists do we have in Taiwan today? According to the *Renjian fubao* (Merit Times), September 15, 2004 issue, the Taiwanese Interior Ministry conducted a survey in 2003 and discovered there

were 11,468 monasteries and small temples and 980,000 followers in the small area of Taiwan and adjacent islands alone. This figure is inconceivable. How is this possible?

1.3 The Crisis of Chinese Buddhism

DDM is not a conventional Buddhist "monastery." Although the Nung Chan Monastery does resemble and operate very much like a typical Buddhist monastery, we do not have a great number of registered members. This is also true with two of our branch monasteries: Zhaiming Monastery and Ziyun Monastery. In fact, many Buddhist monasteries in Taiwan are not registered with the government as Buddhist "monasteries" or "temples." Instead, they are registered as Buddhist Foundations or special congregation groups. In Taiwan the term "temple" or "monastery" refers not only to Buddhist organizations, but also other religious organizations such as Daoism and the syncretic new Taiwanese religion called I-Kuan Tao (IKT) or "Pervasive Truth." So the figure from the Interior Ministry must include temples and monasteries from all religious traditions that have the Chinese character of "temple" in their names. Moreover, out of all the temples and monasteries in Taiwan, the percentage of folk Daoist shrines and temples is 78.4%, and that of Buddhism is

19.91%. Clearly, there is a big gap between these two traditions. So the question is this: How many Buddhists are there truly in Taiwan?

Let's first take a look at DDM, which had 550,000 registered members in 2006. This number refers to those who had supported and contributed financially to DDM. There are, however, less than 200,000 people who registered themselves as official Buddhists by taking refuge in the Three Jewels under DDM organizations. Even though these are still very encouraging statistics, many of the registered supporters are already registered Buddhists in other Buddhist organizations. Some of them have yet to take refuge in the Three Jewels or to become official Buddhists. While it is true that there are Buddhist organizations with millions of followers, it is also a fact that not all have taken the five precepts and refuge in the Three Jewels.

Now consider the population of the sangha. In Taiwan, there are annual banquets for Buddhist monastics hosted by large monasteries. Many lay Buddhists communally take part to finance these occasions in order to generate merits. Generally four to five thousand monastics turn up at these

events in each of the northern, central, and southern parts of Taiwan. This means that we have around 15,000 sangha members. On the one hand, I sincerely believe that all of these 15,000 monks and nuns are outstanding religious teachers. On the other hand, the truth is that in many of the global interfaith conferences and dialogs I seldom come across Buddhist masters representing Buddhism. The number of Chinese Buddhist representatives is even less. Out of all the typical Buddhist representatives, there are far more from the Theravāda, Tibetan, Japanese, Korean, or Vietnamese traditions than from the Chinese tradition. We ought to reflect carefully and deeply on why this is the case.

From the standpoint of world religions, Chinese Buddhism is indeed in a state of crisis, facing great challenges. The fact that many Chinese Buddhists subscribe to a bleak view of the future of Chinese Buddhism is also something lamentable. Many of them feel that they are better off practicing Tibetan or Theravāda Buddhism. Some are even ordained into the Tibetan or Theravāda traditions. There would not be any future for Chinese Buddhism if all Chinese Buddhists held such attitudes. My point has nothing to do with sectarianism. Rather, it has to do with the state of affairs

in Chinese Buddhism. We have to recognize the value of our own tradition. This is where we come from. Even though I have once said, "All forms of Buddhism are the same, whether Chinese, Theravāda or Tibetan. Even if Chinese Buddhism were to become extinct, as long as these other traditions exist, Buddhism will not disappear from this world." I said this, however, with much concern about Chinese Buddhism.

Chinese Buddhism is the second largest source and lineage in Mahāyāna Buddhism. It has spread to East Asian countries such as Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, Vietnam, and South Asian countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines, and even Indonesia. The weakening of Chinese Buddhism will have an adverse effect on Chinese Buddhists in these other countries.

Chinese Buddhism, with its focus on practical wisdom and its sense of social responsibility to purify the world, has developed the ability and depth to absorb, embrace, and evolve with the needs of modern life. Because of these unique qualities in Chinese Buddhism, it has the potential to be a new form of engaged "Humanistic Buddhism." We must identify and develop faith in Chinese Buddhism.

Historically the Chan tradition has always stood out among other Chinese Buddhist traditions. Chan has developed distinct qualities that are not readily found in other traditions of Chinese Buddhism. These qualities can be characterized as: Its unique understanding and preservation of buddhadharma; the applicability and effectiveness of its methods of practice; the integrity of its transmissions; and its ability to absorb teachings from other Buddhist traditions. However, because of its highly adaptive nature and various socio-political factors, it has always been weak at establishing itself as a distinct institution. Both the Tibetan and Japanese Buddhist lineages developed clear sectarian lines and distinct monastic affiliations. Therefore, in the history of their development, these forms of Buddhism have been well protected. For example, the appointment of new abbots to monasteries happened internally within each sect, and new abbotship would not result in a change or loss of certain lineages within a particular tradition. This kind of internal stability is comparatively weak in Chinese Buddhism. We need to be concerned about our sustainability as a distinct tradition in Buddhism.

Part 2: Buddhism and Religion

2.1 The Functions of Religion

Let's examine the various functions of religion.

Firstly, faith is an important element in religion. It gives hope for those who are lost and provides a sense of direction for those who find life meaningless. Religion also provides answers to many unanswerable questions and challenges in life, thereby stabilizing individuals and societies. Religious devotion can be an indispensable force behind peace and harmony for individuals and society as a whole.

Secondly, religion provides means to unravel metaphysic questions, such as those relating to past, present, and future lives, or such existential questions as, "Who am I?" When people discover answers to these questions through religious practice or devotion, they also discover meaning in their lives.

These benefits can be found in any system of religion, be it folk religion, premodern religion, or mainstream religion. Buddhism for many people also functions in this manner. For example, I always advise and encourage people to recite the

name of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva, the Bodhisattva of Mercy (Guanyin pusa), if they encounter grave illness or natural calamities. I also encourage people to recite the names of buddhas and bodhisattvas, such as the name of Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva, the embodiment of wisdom in Buddhism, or Amitābha Buddha, the Buddha of the Western Pure Land of Bliss. These practices come from religious devotion. Buddhism is not different from other religions at this level. From this perspective, Buddhist monastics are religious teachers.

2.2 The Differences Between Buddhism and Other Religions.

In terms of religious devotion, what is unique in Buddhism is its twofold path of other-power and self-power practices. An example of these practices can be found in the treatise called *Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣā*, expounded by Nāgārjuna (150-250), where it discusses the "easy path" and the "difficult path." People have interpreted the model of the easy path as relying on external power to transcend one's suffering. For example, Pure Land practitioners rely on the power of Amitābha Buddha's vow so as to take rebirth in his Pure Land. The difficult path has been interpreted as relying more on one's own diligent effort in cultivating and realizing the six

great perfections to become a Buddha, which takes a seemingly infinite period of time (of three great innumerable kalpas or eons, which is equivalent to 1.28 trillion years!). This is not the same with other monotheistic or polytheistic religions. Almost all non-Buddhist religions rely exclusively on faith in some external power, and subscribe to the belief that no human being could ever become or transcend god(s). In the soteriology of these religions of faith, human beings receive the love and grace from god(s) and either go to heaven or unite with a higher power.

Buddhism, on the other hand, emphasizes diligent cultivation, even in the practice and approach of the other-powered easy path. For example, there are various levels of rebirth in the Pure Land practice, and greater effort and cultivation will lead to higher levels of rebirth. It is for this reason that Buddhism refers to non-Buddhist religions as "outer paths" ("path" means the way of religious practice or devotion) because they seek truth and liberation "outside" oneself.

The most important teaching in Buddhism is dependent origination, which consists of the Four Noble Truths and

the Twelve Links of Dependent Origination. The Four Noble Truths are Suffering, the Cause of Suffering, the Cessation of Suffering, and the Way out of Suffering. The Cause of Suffering (cause) leads to Suffering (effect). The Way out of Suffering (cause) leads to the Cessation of Suffering (effect). This is the universal web of causation. Both the Noble Truths of Suffering and the Cause of Suffering constitute the cause and effect of an endless chain of birth and death, while the Noble Truths of the Way out of Suffering and the Cessation of Suffering are the cause and effect of an end to the cycles of birth and death. The Twelve Links of Dependent Origination are in fact the Noble Truths of Suffering and Cause of Suffering. They are: ignorance, formation, consciousness, name and form, the six sense faculties, contact, feeling, craving, grasping, becoming, birth, and finally aging and death. Genuine cultivation of the Way leads to the extinction of ignorance, followed by the extinction of formation, here referring to karma, and the extinction of formation leads to the extinction of the rest of the links. The causes and conditions of this process of extinguishing suffering and its causes are dependent on the Way out of Suffering, which is generally laid out in the teachings on the Eightfold Noble Path and the Thirty-Seven Aids to Enlightenment. The teachings of

cause and effect are inseparable from the foundational teaching of dependent origination. That is, the Twelve Links of Dependent Origination have two levels of cause and effect: the causation of continuing the cycle of birth and death, and the causation of the ending of this cycle, the first being conditioned arising, and the second being conditioned ending.[2]

2.3 Spread and Development of Buddhism

Buddhism began with Śākyamuni Buddha. Historians and practitioners of Buddhism have stipulated various forms of Buddhism. "Fundamental Buddhism" refers to the time when Śākyamuni lived in India. "Early Buddhism" refers to the era 100 years after his passing. However, some people refer to both of these eras as "Early Buddhism." What is important here is that the uniqueness of Buddhism, different from other religions, lies in its teachings of the Four Noble Truths, the Twelve Links of Dependent Origination, and the law of cause and effect.

The Eightfold Noble Path represents a systematic and gradual approach to attaining liberation, one that can also be categorized into the Three Higher Studies of precepts, concentration, and wisdom. These three general areas in

conjunction with the cultivation of the Eightfold Path are the prerequisites of liberation. This is the basic teaching espoused by the Buddha. Yet, due to the spiritual dispositions of his immediate disciples, none could perfect all three areas of study. Some excelled in precepts, while others in concentration or wisdom. In time, every one of the Buddha's chief disciples had his distinct areas of specialization. For example, Mahāmaudgalyāyana was known for his supermundane powers, Ānanda for his incredible memory, Śāriputra for his incomparable wisdom, Subhuti for his understanding of emptiness, Mahākāśyapa for his strict adherence to austerities, and Mahakatyayana for his analytical skills. Naturally, they all had their own followers. After one hundred to two hundred years, interpretations of Buddhism were divided into various lineages. Moreover, these different lineages of Buddhism spread to different geographical regions and gradually evolved into different established schools that accommodated various local customs, languages, and even localized cultural-religious needs.

The first major division was between the conservative Sthaviravāda and the progressive Māhāsaṅghika schools. From these two schools, many more schools arose. Compared

to "Fundamental" or "Early Buddhism," these splinter schools are sometimes referred to in scholarly circles as "Nikaya Buddhism." But compared to the later Mahāyāna Buddhism, they are all seen as Hīnayāna Buddhism, that is, the form of Buddhism that focused on individual liberation. One of the schools that splintered from the Sthaviravāda was the Sarvāstivāda, which supposedly began in central India and subsequently spread to the northwest. This school of thought was quite influential and produced many outstanding Abhidharma treatises. In the Chinese canon, many of the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma treatises were preserved, one of which—the *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya* by Vasubhandu (5th century)—was particularly influential in the Chinese Buddhist conception of Hīnayāna Buddhism and the later development of Mahāyāna Yogacara Buddhism.

The Mahāyāna teachings on prajñā (transcendent wisdom) and śunyata or emptiness are closely related to the Māhāsaṅghika School, and it is generally believed that these teachings originated and developed in Southern India, though there is no direct evidence. We can be certain, however, that during the second century the great Buddhist saint Nāgārjuna was active in Southern India. Many of his writings,

notably the *Mādhyamika-kārikā or Fundamental Verses on the Middle Way*, center around the teaching of prajñā from the perspectives of dependent origination and the Two Truths. These teachings expound on śunyata or the nature of emptiness during a time when Buddhism was divided into various sects. After his passing, Nāgārjuna's teachings and those of his disciple Aryadeva were recognized as the foundations of the Madhyamaka or "Middle Way School." Two other advocates of Mahāyāna Buddhism were Asaṅga and his half brother Vasubandhu in the fourth and fifth centuries. Vasubandhu was originally an active proponent of Hīnayāna before he was converted by Asaṅga to the Mahāyāna teaching of universal liberation. Based on the *Saṃdhinirmocana-sūtra* and other scriptures, these two brothers taught the existence of phenomenal appearances as mere constructions of consciousness, forming the core of what later became the Indian Yogācāra School. In China, this school is termed Consciousness-Only.

What about the Tathāgatagarbha teaching in Mahāyāna Buddhism? "Tathāgata" is an epithet for the Buddha; garbha has the meaning of repository or that which is stored. Together we can understand tathāgatagarbha as referring to the Buddha within. The Middle Way doctrine stresses emptiness

while the Consciousness-Only doctrine stresses existence. The Tathāgatagarbha teaching can be understood as an amalgamation of these two doctrines of emptiness and existence. Thus in this teaching there are two types of Tathāgatagarbha: the Tathāgatagarbha as Empty and the Tathāgatagarbha as Non-Empty.

These three main strands of Indian Buddhist doctrine above actually stem from the same source: the twelve links of dependent-origination, which is the central teaching for both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna Buddhism.

Historically, while Indian Buddhism can be generally divided technically into Early Buddhism and Mahāyāna Buddhism, the latter can be further divided into three phases of early, middle, and late Mahāyāna Buddhism. Early and middle Mahāyāna corresponds roughly to the teachings of Madhyamaka, Yogācāra, and part of the Tathāgatagarbha. Late Mahāyāna corresponds to esoteric or Tantric Buddhism, which can be categorized as a later development of Tathāgatagarbha teachings.

Geographically, the transmission of Buddhism to China

and Tibet is often referred to as the "northern tradition," whereas the transmission to South Asian countries is known as the "southern tradition."

Chinese Buddhism incorporated teachings and preserved scriptures from various schools, ranging from the four *Āgamas* (in Pāli they are the four *Nikayas*) and the various branches of monastic discipline (Vinaya), the different *Abhidharma* treatises from Early Buddhism, and all the Madhyamaka, Yogācāra, and Tathāgatagarbha sūtras and treatises from the early and middle period of Indian Mahāyāna. While the late Tantric Buddhism led by masters such as Amoghavajra (705-774) did arrive in China during the Tang Dynasty, Tantrism as a distinct form of Buddhism faded into obscurity not long after the lifetimes of these masters. However, the transmission of Tantric Buddhism did continue on to Japan as the Eastern Esoteric Sect (tomitsu) through the Japanese master Kukai (774-835) and the Tendai Esoteric Sect (taimitsu) through Master Saicho (767-822). The Tantric schools in Tibet came directly from India. In fact, Tibetan Buddhism claims its superiority over other forms of Buddhism because adherents of Tibetan Buddhism believe that their Tantric path is completely unique from all other

Buddhist traditions. This claim is questionable.

Buddhism also spread to South Asian countries such as Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and Thailand. Buddhists in these regions regard themselves as "followers of the elders" or the Theravāda, which is an offshoot from the Sthāviravāda school, one of the two oldest schools of Buddhism. Despite the Theravadins' claim to be the oldest and the original form of Buddhism, the Sthāviravāda split into many traditions when it spread to the northwest and the southern regions of India. The former lineage became known as the Sarvāstivāda, and the latter, which had very little changes or developments, was known as the Vibhāṣikas. One of the outstanding treatises of this southern branch, *Visuddhimagga* or the *Path of Purification*, was written by the great 5th century Indian Buddhist monk Buddhaghoṣa. This work was translated twice in Chinese Buddhism, first during the Song Dynasty (960-1279) and again in modern times. Both versions are available in Taiwan today. Historically, there were more Buddhist masters and scholars in the northern Mahāyāna tradition. As a result, the canon of the northern tradition is much larger than the southern Pali canon. The first 55 volumes of the Mahāyāna canon, for example, contain works

from both China and India. The southern tradition had fewer Buddhist writers and commentators, so there were no new additions to the canon and it is shorter than that of the Chinese. However, their canon retains much of the flavor of the earlier Nikaya Buddhism.

The claim of superiority by Tibetan Buddhists over other forms of Buddhism comes from its expanded collection of works on logic, later developed Madhyamaka philosophy, literature on Buddhist epistemology, and the Hindu-influenced Tantrism. Hence, Tibetan Buddhism is sometimes referred to as Tantric Buddhism, esoteric Buddhism, or the "Diamond Vehicle" (Vajrayāna). This form of Buddhism is quite different from the Mahāyāna Buddhism of the early and middle periods. The Buddhism of this later period was confined to India's southern regions because of a thriving revival of various non-Buddhist schools. It was inevitable for Buddhism to adapt to the needs of people and appropriate elements of non-Buddhist tantric teachings into Buddhism. In China, these esoteric elements were quite alien. The Chinese Buddhist canon contains several original works that are not found in the Tibetan canon, notably the various *Abhidharma* literatures and works of different vinaya schools

of early Buddhism. One could argue that it contains the heart of the Buddhist teachings without the contamination of various non-Buddhist philosophies.

During the Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368), the Mongolian rulers introduced Tibetan Buddhism to China. Subsequently in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), many esoteric teachings came directly from Tibet. The emperors of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) were Manchus, and many were followers of Tibetan Buddhism. Hence, during this time Tibetan Buddhism was mainly practiced among the upper echelons of the imperial court and the Mongolian and Manchu commoners in China. Very few Chinese, save for those in the political circles, were exposed to or subscribed to Tibetan Buddhism. Despite many attempts, Tibetan Buddhism in China during the late imperial time never had a lasting impact. The reasons for this are complex, but one reason may be the fundamental disparity between esoteric teachings and Confucian ethical values founded on concrete human concerns and political values. This made it very difficult for a new set of values, especially one based on the supramundane, esoteric teachings and deities so valued in Tibetan Buddhism, to take root in China.

Part 3: The Distinctive Characteristic of Chinese Buddhism

Historically, one of the attributes of Chinese Mahāyāna Buddhism has been its ability to integrate itself with Confucianism and Daoism. For example, many Chinese Buddhist masters and thinkers had deep understandings of the classics of Confucianism and Daoism and appropriated them to aid the promotion of Buddhadharma (even though there were Confucian and Daoist adherents who opposed Buddhism). As a result, their teachings were well-received. Confucianism was a set of worldly moral teachings, intertwined with the familial, social, and political lives of the people. Daoism was comparatively otherworldly, and focused on practices of transcendence, immortality, and longevity. The world-transcending and world-engaging tendencies parallel the main difference between Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna teachings: The former centers on individual liberation; the latter focuses on universal liberation through purifying the society and maturing sentient beings, the principle teaching of Mahāyāna being the practice of the bodhisattva path.

3.1 The Expansion of Mahāyāna Buddhism

Chinese Buddhism embodies the fully developed form of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Of course, the bodhisattva path of the Mahāyāna is founded on the teachings that lead to positive rebirth in the human and god realms, and the teachings of liberation from the cycle of birth and death in saṃsāra. The former set of teachings refers to the five precepts and ten virtues. The latter set of teachings is common to all Buddhism. Yet, while this teaching is shared in both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna Buddhism, the difference is that in the Mahāyāna tradition the transcendence of birth and death is realized in the midst of birth and death. That is, liberation can be found in the here and now. There is no nirvāṇa apart from saṃsāra. This is a central message of the *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch*: "Buddhadharma is found in the world; and enlightenment is inseparable from the world." The word "bodhisattva" consists of two words: bodhi or "enlightening" and sattva or "sentient being." Thus, bodhisattva means enlightening being, which points also to a bodhisattva's purpose: enlightening self and others. Enlightenment here refers to insights into the nature of vexations and of the samsaric cycles of birth and death. In the Chinese commenta-

rial tradition, a bodhisattva is also called "a sentient being with a great mind for the way." A person with a great mind is one who encourages all sentient beings to neither attach to birth and death nor fear it. Being unbound by these two attachments is the great liberation of the Mahāyāna bodhisattva. This understanding of liberation from birth and death is very different from that of Hīnayāna Buddhism.

Early Buddhism stipulates that it takes from three lifetimes to sixty kalpas or eons for a śrāvaka (i.e., a "voice-hearer" of the Buddha's teachings) to reach liberation, a longer period for a prateykhabuddha (i.e., a self-enlightened being) from four lifetimes to one hundred kalpas or eons to reach liberation, and an even longer period of three great innumerable kalpas to reach Buddhahood. Even though many schools in Chinese Buddhism, including the Chan School, speak of attaining Buddhahood, it is by no means an easy task. According to the scriptures, there are 1,000 buddhas in Bhadra Kalpa, the current kalpa we're living in, where Śākyamuni Buddha is the fourth Buddha, to be followed by the future Buddha, Maitreya.

The so-called "buddhahood in one's lifetime" in Tibetan

Buddhism refers to the attainment of the merit of great compassion and wisdom that accord with one's yidam, or meditation deity. This process requires the empowerment from one's guru (teacher) and the cultivation of various special practices. In Chan Buddhism, we have expressions such as "illuminating the mind and seeing one's nature" and "Seeing the nature, and attaining Buddhahood." These expressions refer to the direct experience of the buddha-nature that is identical to all past, present, and future buddhas.

The reason that Chinese Buddhism has not been well recognized and accepted today is because Chinese Buddhism has not focused on educating and training capable practitioners who not only understand but also have deep experience in the teachings of Chinese Buddhism. This is because few really spend time studying the wealth of our tradition. Nowadays even Chinese Buddhists are critical of Chinese Buddhism. In the future, DDM members will continue to come in contact with great practitioners of Tibetan and Theravāda Buddhism. It will be easy to become enchanted by their elaborate systems of doctrine and practices, and how these teachings can benefit people's lives. Other people's lawns will always seem "greener." If we are clueless to the depth of Chinese Bud-

dhism, naturally we will not be able to discuss or experience the buddhadharma as they do. Naturally, we will be converted to other forms of Buddhism and lose our own identity. If this happens, then perhaps DDM will become a global Buddhist educational center that encourages the study of all forms of Buddhism. On a positive note, this could be a good thing. DDM might even become an important center for the study of Indian, Tibetan, and East Asian Buddhism. This would not be unlike the Nālandā University of ancient India where Buddhist monastics studied different forms of Buddhism including the Middle Way and the Consciousness-Only all under one roof. Yet, wouldn't it be a pity to witness the decline of Chinese Buddhism? How can the potential disappearance of Chinese Buddhism be good news for global Buddhism? The worse scenario would be that Chinese Buddhism ceases to be the practice for the Chinese, and that the humanistic and socially engaged teachings of Chan Buddhism at DDM begin to fade away. Thus, I must reiterate that DDM needs to stand firmly behind Chinese Buddhism. If we fail to do so, then those who wish to study Chinese Chan could only turn to Japan, Vietnam, and elsewhere.

I also need to reiterate that my teachings are grounded in

Indian Buddhism. My book *Orthodox Chinese Buddhism*, which I wrote many years ago but published recently in English, is based on the teachings from the *Āgamas*. I have also given various lectures in Taiwan and the United States on the Madhyamaka and Consciousness-Only teachings. These teachings are now published; the most recent one is my commentary on the "Verses on Eight Consciousnesses." My studies of these doctrines have deepened and broadened my own understanding of Buddhism as a whole. In my efforts to make Buddhism accessible to more people, with an eye on developing a humanistic form of Buddhism that would address the needs of our society, I have been promoting Chinese Chan Buddhism under the banner of "inheriting the past, inspiring the future." My endeavor is not to compete with other Buddhist schools, but to fully develop Chinese Chan Buddhism.

3.2 The Eight Schools of the Mahāyāna Tradition

Scholars have historicized the period from the Southern and Northern Dynasties (420-588) to the Sui (581-617) and Tang dynasties (618-907) as the apogee of Chinese Buddhism, a period that witnessed the development of eight Chinese Mahāyāna schools. They are the Three Treatise, the Pure

Land, the Tiantai, the Consciousness-Only, the Huayan, the Vinaya, the Chan, and the Tantric schools. The Three Treatises and Consciousness-Only schools were distinctively Indian. The former school, as developed by the eminent monk Jizang (549-623), has close connections to Indian Madhyamaka thought. The latter school, as developed by Xuanzang (602-664) and Kuiji (632-682), is laden with complex Indian Buddhist theories that had very little influence on the course of development of Chinese Buddhism as a whole. This may be due to the fact that the complex analytical nature of this teaching is foreign to Chinese philosophy. Similarly, some of the philosophical doctrines in the Chinese Tantric School are quite foreign to the Confucian mind. These three schools, hence, did not last very long in China. They disappeared after a few generations. Strictly speaking the Vinaya School cannot really be considered a school or tradition because there was no continuity of vinaya studies. It resembled more a disembodied group of monks – in different periods of Chinese Buddhist history – who specialized in studying the "Four Divisions of the Codes of Conduct," which is the vinaya of the Dharmaguptā school of early Indian Buddhism and the tradition of vinaya that Chinese Buddhists follow. However, traditional Chinese Buddhists speak of three distinct

communities of monks who studied the Chinese Buddhist vinaya: the Southern Mountain lineage,[3] the lineage from Xiang Province, and the Eastern Tower lineage. Today, only the Southern Mountain Vinaya lineage remains. Most contemporary clerics who study the vinaya align themselves with the interpretations of this lineage. More information can be found in my Chinese book, *Jielu xue gangyao* (The Essentials of Vinaya). The English translation of this book is forthcoming.

Every Chinese Buddhist monastic in the past or the present is ordained under the Dharmaguptā system of precepts. Since medieval times, Chinese Buddhists have followed the Southern Mountain Vinaya lineage. Curiously, however, very few Buddhist clerics in history have actually studied this lineage of interpreting precepts. In the Ming Dynasty, the Vinaya School ceased completely. Among all the Buddhist clerics, Ouyi Zhixu (1599-1656) wrote the most on the subject of Buddhist precepts. Fortunately, during the late Ming vinaya transmissions were revitalized on Mt. Baohua. It is this Baohua lineage of ordination that comes down to us today. Yet, the Baohua lineage is dissimilar from that of the Southern Mountain Vinaya lineage. We must remember that

the Chinese Vinaya School never had an institutional basis or any discrete community of followers. Monasteries that conducted ordination services and transmitted the precepts were not institutionally affiliated with any one school.

As for the other Chinese Buddhism, Tiantai has been an extremely influential school that systematized both Indian Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna teachings, and developed its doctrinal position around the *Lotus Sūtra* and different strains of indigenous Chinese thought. The Tiantai genealogy identifies its first Indian patriarch as none other than the founder of Madhyamaka or Middle Way School, Nāgārjuna. The first supposed Chinese Tiantai lineage master was Huiwen (d.u.), who was succeeded by Huisi (515-577). The Tiantai School developed and peaked at the time of its fourth patriarch, Master Zhiyi (538-597). One of his disciples, Zhang'an (d.u.), organized his discourses into the three categories of intellectual thought, doctrine, and practice. By then the Tiantai School had reached its full development. It was not only a meticulously organized philosophy, but also had a system of meditation practices. However, subsequent Tiantai followers placed more emphasis on the philosophical aspect than its methods of meditation. As a result, Tiantai Buddhism in later

generations became mere philosophy and was not popularly practiced by people. Fortunately, periodically there were some outstanding Tiantai cleric-scholars who kept the teachings alive. After the Song Dynasty (960-1276), very few monastic institutions were associated with this school.

After the inception of Tiantai, the Huayan School emerged. This is a school founded on the teachings embodied in the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* (*Flower Ornament Scripture*). "Huayan" is a translation of the Avataṃsaka. The school also claims Nāgārjuna as its progenitor. However, doctrinally the Huayan School is closer to the early phase of the Consciousness-Only School in China and the Tathāgatagarbha system of thought. It is also doctrinally similar to the Tiantai and Pure Land traditions. The central tenets of Huayan evolve around the teaching of the "Dharmadhatu" or the inexhaustible realms of phenomena. The Dharmadhatu is a fully developed expression of Tathāgatagarbha thought. This school was neither institutionalized as a distinct school nor was it formulated for the masses. In summary, the Three Treatise, Tiantai, Huayan, and Vinaya schools are scholastic traditions of Chinese Buddhism. Only the teachings of the Pure Land and Chan schools spread to the common people as practical

expressions of Buddhism.

Yet, the Pure Land tradition has always been a diffused form of practice in China. The situation is markedly different in Japan. The Japanese schools of Jōdo shū (Pure Land School), founded by Hōnen (1133-1212), and the later Jōdo shinshū (True Pure Land School), founded by Shinran (1173-1263), are particularly influential in modern Japan. Together, these two Pure Land schools constitute nearly half of the total number of Japanese Buddhists living in Japan. Numerous monasteries are sectarianized as Pure Land institutions. In fact every Japanese Buddhist temple and monastery was and is institutionalized and affiliated with a particular sect. In China there were very few designated Pure Land institutions. The reason is simple: there was no Pure Land School. The so-called Pure Land monasteries were only temporarily designated because the resident abbot advocated the practice of reciting Amitābha Buddha's name. These masters' influence never led to the establishment of a continuous lineage of Pure Land masters. After their passing, their monasteries changed to centers of other forms of Buddhist practice—usually Chan. In contrast, Japanese Pure Land monasteries had sectarian affiliations. A temple's sectarian affiliation did not typically

change when abbots changed.

Even though Japanese Pure Land Buddhism conceives of its own origin as tracing back to China, specifically to Shandao (613-681), the Chinese Pure Land School recognizes several founders of the tradition. The earliest is Huiyuan (334-416) of Mt. Lu. The modern Chinese Buddhist master, Yinguang (1861-1940), considered himself as the thirteenth patriarch in the Chinese Pure Land lineage. Yet, from the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317-420) to our contemporary times, there were only thirteen Chinese Pure Land masters. Some of them never considered themselves as Pure Land masters per se. From this, we see that such a lineage was never constructed on the basis of master-disciple relationship, since many of these masters had no direct relationship to one another. For example, the next lineage master after the famous Ming Dynasty monk, Ouyi Zhixu, is the Qing Dynasty master Hongluo (aka, the eminent Master Chewu). And from him the lineage skipped to Yinguang of the Republican period. This lineage has always been retroactively constructed. Modern scholars have also historicized various figures as "Pure Land masters." In fact there are quite a few of these scholarly lineage constructions. At least in China, even though there were many

Buddhists with a Pure Land practice persuasion, there was in fact no Pure Land School as a corporate entity that continued without interruptions from the past to the present.

Chinese Chan Buddhism is the only tradition that was institutionalized as a corporate entity with a community of monastics who developed a system of transmissions from master to disciple. In reality, dhyāna, from which the term "chan" originates, is a practice emphasized by all three vehicles (śrāvaka, pratyekabuddha, and bodhisattva vehicles) of Hīnayāna, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna, and "pure land" can be said to be the final destination—the final goal—of all of Mahāyāna Buddhists. Why? Because the construction of a pure land, or buddhaksetra, is the goal of all bodhisattvas and buddhas. If you want to deliver sentient beings, then you must establish a pure land. In the process of adorning and constructing a pure land—that is, a pure environment through which sentient beings live—a bodhisattva must deliver sentient beings; and the process of delivering sentient beings is the process of adorning and creating a pure land. In this sense, the place or world through which a bodhisattva carries out his bodhisattva work is his pure land. Thus Amitābha Buddha's pure land, Sukhāvatī (Western Pure Land), is

really not the only pure land. Nor is it true that only "Pure Land Buddhists" engage in the practice of buddhānusmrti, or reciting and recollecting the names of buddhas. This is not an exclusive "Pure Land" practice. The pure land is a generalized Mahāyāna goal. All schools of Mahāyāna Buddhism recollect buddhas' names, including the Chan School. Many great Chan practitioners affirm the existence of pure lands, and engage in the practices of reciting or recollecting the names of the Buddha. What is important to highlight here is that among all the expressions of Chinese Buddhism, Chan is the only tradition with an uninterrupted lineage, and a formal institutional foundation.

3.3 Chan: Integrating the Best Aspects of All Buddhist Traditions

What we today consider to be the distinctive features of Chinese Buddhism is the Chan School, which took shape in the Tang Dynasty, and continue to exist throughout China and Taiwan even today. Yet, when people speak of Chan, they think of it as a unitary, comprehensive tradition, without different doctrinal affiliations or practice orientations. Historically, many Chan institutions, or monasteries, had their own distinctive features. For example, at some Chan monasteries,

Tiantai or Huayan doctrines were emphasized, while others emphasized Consciousness-Only or Vinaya. In terms of practice, some emphasized the practice of reciting the Buddha's name, while others utilized elements of esoteric Buddhism, such as recitation of spells or dhāraṇis and mantras. (A mantra is a shorter dhāraṇi.) The liturgy in nearly all Chan institutions incorporates dhāraṇīs, such as *uṣṇīṣavijayā-dhāraṇī* (Buddha-crown spell), *Śūraṅgama dhāraṇī* (Heroic March spell), the *mahā-karuṇika-citta-dhāraṇī* (Great Compassion spell), and the ten shorter mantras, etc. From this, we can see that the Chan tradition is really the mature culmination of all Mahāyāna doctrines and practices, and has appropriated all the strengths of the Chinese Buddhist traditions.

The eminent Master Taixu (1890-1947) synthesized and reorganized the eight-school theory into three main systems of thought: the School of Dharma Nature as Empty Wisdom, the School of Phenomenal Reality as Consciousness Only, and the School of Dharma Realms as Perfectly Awakened. The School of Dharma Nature as Empty Wisdom refers to the Three Treatise School discussed above. The School of Phenomenal Reality as Consciousness Only refers to the systems of thought developed by the eminent monk Xuanzang

and his disciple Kuiji. The School of Dharma Realms as Perfectly Awakened refers to the six of the eight schools other than the Dharma Nature School and the Phenomenal Reality School. In the corpus of Taixu's own work, writings on the School of Dharma Realms as Perfectly Awakened receive the most attention. In other words, he is biased towards this system of thought.

Master Yinshun, a student of Taixu and editor of the latter's corpus, has developed a different three-fold system of doctrinal classification based on Indian Buddhism: the Empty Nature Mere Name system, the False Imagination Mere Consciousness system, and the Truly Eternal Mere Mind system.[4] The Truly Eternal Mere Mind system includes, but is not limited to, scriptures from the Tathāgatagarbha system of thought that detail the teachings on true suchness, tathāgatagarbha, buddha-nature, dharmadhatu, dharma nature, true nature, and true form. The False Imagination Mere Consciousness system refers to the doctrines set forth by the Indian Yogācāra tradition of Maitreyanātha, Asaṅga, and Vasubandhu. The Truly Eternal Mere Mind system is the Madhyamaka tradition founded by Nāgārjuna, Aryadeva, Bhāvaviveka, and Chandrakirti.

Yinshun's classification is not based on historical development, but on systems of thought. He returns all the later doctrinal elaborations in Buddhism back to India, and sorts out which ones are the Empty Nature Mere Name system, the False Imagination Mere Consciousness system, and the Truly Eternal Mere Mind system. He takes the Empty Nature Mere Name system, which is in accordance with the teachings set forth in the *Āgamas*, as the foundation of all Buddhism. Yinshun does not take the *Āgamas* as the pinnacle of Buddhist teachings. Instead, he takes the Madhyamaka doctrine, which he calls Empty Nature Mere Name, as the core of the Buddha's message. This is in contradistinction to Taixu's placement of the School of Dharma Realms as Perfectly Awakened as the core of the Buddha's message. From this perspective, both of these masters were great thinkers and systematizers. However, their thoughts were never developed into an institutionalized tradition. I have studied these two thinkers' systematization from the perspective of Chinese Chan in modern times. I hope to bring into dialogue Indian Buddhism, as the wellspring of all expressions of Buddhism, with the later developed Northern and Southern traditions of Buddhism. To the extent of my knowledge, I believe that Chan Buddhism as developed in China is the core of the Buddha's message.

Part 4: The Boundaries of Chinese Chan Buddhism

4.1 An Inclusive Teaching of Buddhadharma

Chinese Chan Buddhism does not have a specific set of teachings that delineates its boundaries. The Tiantai text on meditation, *Dhyānaparamita (Shi chan boluomi)*, states that dhyāna includes all other paramitas. Similarly, Chan is a shared teaching of the three vehicles of the śrāvaka, the pratyekabuddha, and the bodhisattva. In other words, this particular tradition within Chinese Buddhism can serve as a rubric to understand the whole of buddhadharma. If we do not limit Chan merely to seated meditation, then we must recognize that all the eminent masters of the Tiantai and Huayan schools in the past were Chan masters. Moreover, all the practices of sūtra recitation, prostrations, Buddha's name recitation, and seated meditation performed by Vinaya masters can also be considered Chan. Thus we must understand that the three studies of precepts, concentration, and wisdom are inseparable. For those people who recite the Buddha's name according to the *Sūtra of Contemplation on the Buddha of Infinite Life*, the word "contemplation" is itself Chan. The technical term is chan guan, or chan contemplation.

The masters of the Yogācāra tradition can also be considered Chan masters. The teaching of the Middle Way in the Madhyamaka tradition is really a contemplation of emptiness or śunyatā. Such contemplation actually stems from an observation of the twelve-link chain of dependent origination. It is at once a visualization and a contemplation method. Likewise, esoteric Buddhism's focus on visualizing one's meditation deity is a practice that establishes an identity between two beings. Apart from such identity, the practice cannot be considered esoteric. Precisely because one establishes this union, the practice can be considered a form of "yoga," which can also be considered as a form of Chan. From this logic we see that every tradition within Buddhism can be included within the path of Chan.

It is uncertain when Chinese Buddhists started using the expression of "teachings that fall under Chan" (zongxia) and "teachings that fall under doctrine" (jiaoxia), which really points to the teachings of Tiantai. But in truth, the Tiantai School places equal emphasis on doctrine and practice. Also, despite Chan's claim of itself as a separate tradition outside of the teaching—in other words, doctrine—if we examine the *Platform Scripture*, one of the main messages is the need to

master practice (zongtong) and discourse (shuotong). The *Platform Scripture* also quotes over ten *sūtras* and commentaries explicitly and implicitly.[5] The sayings, "From Chan (Mind) stems doctrine," and "Use the doctrine to awaken to the mind," point to the Dharma of cause and effect that is shared by Early Buddhism and Mahāyāna Buddhism. The awakening of Śākyamuni Buddha under the bodhi tree is precisely the state of illuminating the mind and seeing the self-nature. What is illuminated is the mind without self-attachment. This mind is the Chan mind, and is what Chan refers to as zong, the principle. After his awakening of the mind without self-attachment, which in Chan is called no-mind, Śākyamuni Buddha expounded the teachings of Four Noble Truths, Twelve-Link Chain of Dependent Origination, Five Skandhas, Eighteen Realms, Six Paramitas, Four Expedient Means, Three Dharma Seals, Two Truths, and the One Great Vehicle. These doctrines stem from the experience of Chan. Doctrine here refers to the discourse of the Buddha, which can only be realized by practicing Chan.

For all of us who follow the Buddha's teachings, the goal of engaging in Chan contemplations, and undergoing the fourfold practice of hearing, contemplating, cultivating and

actualizing wisdom, is to awaken to our own self-nature. This self-nature is indistinguishable from the buddha-nature of all the buddhas of the past, present, and future. This buddha-nature is the nature of emptiness, free from self-attachment. It is the state of no-mind, which is the heart of Chan. This is called "Using the doctrine to awaken to the mind."

For this reason, despite the fact that Chan masters of the past have claimed the Chan tradition as a tradition that establishes no words and language, they have left us with the largest quantity of discourse records in the canon. These discourse records also testify that these Chan masters were well-versed not only in Buddhist teachings, but also in secular learning. Their claim of not establishing words and language is merely a preemptive measure for Chan practitioners not to attach to their teachings, lest the practitioners' minds become ensnared. The Chan masters' admonition also served the purpose of critiquing those Buddhist teachers who only know how to do research in and write commentaries on the Buddhadharma.

Since the time of Śākyamuni Buddha, the teaching of

Chan—whether it is found in Mahāyāna teachings or the earlier teachings, whether the teaching is gradual or sudden—has consistently been focused on the realization of no-mind, the mind free of self-attachment. In all the various teachings, the essence is still the same.

Chinese Chan is by nature inclusive, universally relevant for all people, and highly adaptable to the changes in Chinese culture. For this reason it is able to spread to all aspects of Chinese society. And for this reason I believe Chan teachings are able to embrace and adapt, and be universally relevant to our pluralistic modern society, cultures, and religious identities, so as to become shared cultural values for humanity.

For many years, I have taught Chan Buddhism, taking its methods and concepts and reinterpreting and rephrasing them in terms of "protection of the spiritual environment." I use this protection of the spiritual environment as a framework to actualize the goal of "uplifting the character of humanity and building a pure land on Earth," and promote the "three-fold fields of education." For this reason, spreading Chinese Chan Buddhism has been my life's work.

4.2 A Human-centered Vision for Liberation

Chinese Buddhism places great emphasis on the human capacity for cultivation. Chan Buddhism stands firmly in the human capacity to realize freedom and liberation – purifying one's mind is the way to purify one's society. Therefore, Chinese Buddhism flourishes in places where Chinese culture is prevalent. Chinese Buddhism in general deemphasizes superstition and abstract celestial phenomena. In the Buddhist canon, under the category of History, there is a hagiographical work called *Record of Thaumaturgical Monks* that details supernatural phenomena of various practitioners. But in the Chan tradition, all the great masters seldom exhibit their supernatural abilities. The *Record of Eminent Monks* also details stories of monks with supernatural abilities – some of whom are Chan masters, but they are not representative of the Chan tradition in general which deemphasizes these sorts of phenomena. Also, in the Chan discourse records from different lineages, sometimes we see Chan masters having supernatural abilities, but the majority of them do not exhibit them. In my own anthology, *Chanmen Lizhu Ji* (*Collection of Pearls within the Chan Gate*), there are a few Chan masters with supernatural powers, but these powers are not neces-

sary prerequisites to being a great Chan master, because non-Buddhist religious traditions also have adherents who possess these supernatural powers. So we really cannot say that it is because of supernatural powers that one becomes a great Buddhist teacher or Chan master.

The core teachings of Chan Buddhism are centered on human capacities and are characteristically down-to-earth. It is unfortunate that in the late imperial times – specifically, the beginning of the late Ming period – the Chan School showed signs of deterioration because some Chan masters paid lip service to gong'ans and emphasized extemporaneous dialogues, and their livelihood strayed from the standards of the bhikshu vinaya. For this reason, the four late Ming eminent Buddhist masters – Hanshan, Zibo, Lianchi, and Ouyi – all dissociated themselves from the Chan tradition, and were critical of it, even though they themselves were Chan masters. This is not to say that the Chan tradition itself is problematic; it is just that many of the so-called Chan masters of that time were self-proclaimed Chan masters, without genuine experience of Chan. However, the uniqueness of Chinese Buddhism is its humanness. That is, it centers on human concerns and the human capacity to genuinely attain freedom for oneself

and benefit society as a whole. This is the uniqueness of Chan. In recent years, there have also been many self-proclaimed "Chan masters" in Taiwan. Some of them are Buddhists, and some of them are not. Even though I am internationally recognized as a Chan master, in Taiwan I prefer not to take on this title, but see myself as a Dharma master.

Part 5: The Chan Teachings Espoused By Dharma Drum Mountain

The origin of buddhadharma is Śākyamuni. The most basic textual foundation of Buddhism is the *Āgamas*. The Chan teaching of Dharma Drum Mountain is a blend of the *Āgamas* with the special teachings of traditional Chinese Chan, while accommodating the needs of modern times and environments. In this sense, the basic attitude of our tradition is open to changes, but in terms of concept and methods our foundation is squarely centered on traditional Chinese Chan.

What exactly is the Chan teaching of the Dharma Drum lineage? My teachings are a culmination of decades of familiarization, reading, studying, and practice of Chan Buddhism, and clarification of the complex development of Buddhism at large. During this time I have published several

books. Perhaps one of the foundational thoughts can be found in the four-chapter Chinese book, *Chan de Tiyan Chan de Kaishi* (The Experience of Chan: Discourses of Chan Buddhism). The first chapter details the essentials of methods of practice, and systematically presents the transmission of Chinese Chan and special features of the lineage masters. The historical dimensions of this chapter were based on *Zengaku shisoshi*, *Chugoku bubun*, by the Japanese scholar, Nukariya Kaiten at Komazawa University. Nukariya's book includes a history of the development of meditational practices from India to Chinese Chan. The other three chapters of my book consist of discourses or teachings that I have given at various places. For those of you who are interested, my foundational teachings can be found in the English books, *Hoofprint of the Ox, Method of No-Method*, which consists of teachings of the practice of Silent Illumination, and *Shattering the Great Doubt*, which includes my teachings on the Huatou practice.

I have clarified the distinctiveness of the Linji and Caodong traditions of Chan, while at the same time freely utilized their methods of huatou (critical phrase) and mozhao (silent illumination). I have elaborated on the interdependence of the gradual approach to self-cultivation as taught in

the Hīnayāna and the Mahāyāna traditions, and the sudden approach to enlightenment of Chan. This approach of teaching Chan is able to adapt to the needs of practitioners in different phases of their progress so that they will derive benefits and realize their mind. Despite the adaptability of this approach, the principle of my teachings is rooted in huatou and mozhao of the lineage masters. It is just that these teachings are made more accessible and relevant to modern people. The lineage of Dharma Drum is passed down so that both the Linji and Caodong traditions are transmitted. However, according to causes and conditions it is possible to transmit just one of the two lineages.

Grounded in the foundation of Chinese Chan Buddhism, practitioners in our lineage do not shy from academic research. In principle, we are not bound by the trappings of words and language. Yet we can freely use Indian, Chinese, and Tibetan Buddhist studies. In this fashion, the Dharma Drum lineage actualizes the principle of non-abiding (as taught in the *Platform Scripture*) and at the same time is able to dynamically expand its reach everywhere. Because we transmit both the Linji and Caodong lines of Chan, our tradition is named "Dharma Drum Lineage of Chan Buddhism."

Part 6: The Reasons and Purpose for Establishing the Dharma Drum Lineage

There are two main causes for the founding of the Dharma Drum lineage:

1. Because the Chan teachings of Dharma Drum Mountain transmit both the lines of Linji and Caodong together, there is a need to establish a new name for the school. But as far as the lineage holder is concerned, he or she can transmit just one or both lines. As far as the practitioners are concerned, if they can derive power from either of these traditions' methods, then he or she will also gain an understanding of the other line. In Chan we have a saying, "When one barrier is penetrated, all barriers can be penetrated."

2. The Chan teachings of Dharma Drum Mountain unify the strengths of early Buddhism and various schools of Chinese Buddhism, as well as incorporating some contemporary methods from Korean Sŏn, Japanese Zen, Vietnamese Thien, even Vipassana methods of the Theravāda tradition and the gradual stages of the path of the Tibetan tradition. In essence, the Dharma Drum lineage is a reconstruction of Chinese

Buddhism and traditional Chinese Chan. In this process of reconstruction, I have transmitted new teachings, therefore we need to establish a new school.

I have already discussed what these new teachings are. For example, I was able to clarify the distinct methods of huatou and mozhao, retain their uniqueness to sudden enlightenment, and at the same time articulate the gradual stages of these methods. In general, these stages entail the course of practice from scattered mind, to a concentrated mind, to the unified mind, to the realization of no-mind. Within each of these stages there are more refined levels and approaches to the practice.

There are two purposes of establishing the Dharma Drum lineage:

1. To harmonize the doctrine of Buddhism with the practice of Chan.

2. To build a bridge between Chan Buddhism and Buddhism of other parts of the world, while at the same time appropriating and furthering the strengths of these other forms of Buddhism within our tradition. For example, I have

stated above (bottom of 3.3) that, "I hope to bring into dialogue Indian Buddhism, as the wellspring of all expressions of Buddhism, with its later developed Northern and Southern transmissions. To the extent of my knowledge, I believe that Chan Buddhism as developed in China is the core of the Buddha's message." Moreover, I have said that the Dharma Drum lineage is grounded in the foundation of Chinese Chan Buddhism which is not bound by the trappings of words and language, nor is it divorcing from academic research. The fruits of Indian, Chinese, and Tibetan Buddhist studies can be freely used. The Dharma Drum lineage actualizes the principle of non-abiding and dynamically expands its reach everywhere.

In other words, the purpose for establishing the Dharma Drum lineage can be said to be for the benefit of the four assemblies of monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen of Dharma Drum Mountain. The ultimate mission of course is to revive Chinese Chan Buddhism, to inherit the past and inspire the future, and benefit all sentient beings.

Part 7: Questions and Answers

Q: Traditional Chan belongs to the Tathāgatagarbha system of thought. Sometimes people believe that after an individual sees self-nature, there is still something "there." Shifu, will you clarify the teaching of Tathāgatagarbha? Also, should Chan practitioners recite the Buddha's name?

A: Chan practitioners do not necessarily have to recite the Buddha's name. It is only that since the late Ming, there were many problems with teachers within Chan circles, so that many true eminent masters of that time, even though they were Chan practitioners, refused to identify themselves with the Chan lineage. For example, master Ouyi was originally a Chan adept, but later on, he gave that up to recite the Buddha's name. Many of the Qing dynasty Chan adepts also recited Amitābha's name. After they derived some power from the practice, they questioned "Who is reciting the Buddha's name?"

The Tathāgatagarbha system of thought is not necessarily problematic. The problems arise when practitioners think that there is a thing called "Tathāgatagarbha," and such

a thing can easily be confused with some kind of alternate existence like God. Those who are clear about the teachings of buddhadharma will not have such problems. Only those people who do not truly understand buddhadharma and practice Chan, even with the slightest psycho-physiological reaction from their practice, they think they have "seen" buddha-nature. What is actually happening to them is probably just a manifestation of illusions or delusions that arise from practice. At most, it is possible that the psycho-physiological reaction is a state of unification or oneness. People who have some of these experiences may believe that they are already enlightened and that they are on par with the buddhas of the past, present, and future.

Buddha-nature is formless. Self-nature is the nature of emptiness. If there is still a trace of attachment, clinging to one's own experience, then the individual can easily misinterpret what he or she is actually experiencing as the realization of enlightenment. In this case, they may feel that there is "something" like the Tathāgatagarbha that can be "experienced." But I must stress again that the Tathāgatagarbha teaching is not problematic in and of itself. I have already elaborated on this in my Chinese work *Huayan xingquan*

(Heart of Huayan Teachings: Commentary on the Origins of Humanity).

Q: The essence of Chan as taught by you is down-to-earth and centered on human concerns. Should we continue to emphasize and utilize the "extemporaneous dialogues and actions" from Chan masters of old? Of course these stories of enlightenment are what people are interested in. They find them fascinating and mystifying.

A: From the middle to the late part of the Tang Dynasty, the great lineage masters of Chan used these approaches only on those who had profound practices and experiences. For beginners, when they don't even have practice to speak of, or those with duller spiritual dispositions, a teacher who uses these "extemporaneous dialogues and actions" is like a copycat or a parrot repeating the words of the ancients. In other words, these teachings will be completely useless. These special expedient means themselves are not the problem. The problem lies in the appropriateness of its execution between a master and a disciple.

If these expediencies are not used, then practitioners

should sincerely start from the basic concepts and methods of practice. For example, the calming and contemplation methods of the Tiantai tradition can be practiced on either their rudimentary or profound levels. Ordinarily, if Chan adepts of old did not begin their practice based on harmonizing the five affairs and establishing a foundation in the five conditions (of the Tiantai tradition), then they would have received some instructions directly from their Chan master on how to investigate huatou. Therefore, some kind of foundation must be built, so that Chan adepts can be equipped with the doctrines and methods of Tiantai and the basic vision of the Huayan tradition. For this reason, without building a foundation in the expedient teachings of Tathāgatagarbha (to which Tiantai and Huayan's teachings belong), it is very difficult for practitioners of Chinese Chan to gain power from the Chan teachings on "no-thought," "no-abiding," and "no-form."

Historically, Chan Buddhism developed in stages. I have talked about that in my Chinese book, *Chan de tiyan chan de kaishi* (The Experience of Chan: Discourses on Chan Buddhism; equivalents can be found in *Hoofprints of the Ox*). With Bodhidharma, traditions of meditation mark the begin-

ning of Chan. Prior to this, most of the methods of practice were oriented towards the attainment of samādhi and *dhyāna*, or the samādhi of nine levels.（修九次定的禪法）After the sixth patriarch, Huineng, Chan masters in the lines of transmission stemming from him mostly used extemporaneous dialogue and actions on their disciples. Towards the end of the Tang, Chan exhibited a wide range of miscellaneous practices. Some of them incorporated teachings from other Buddhist traditions. Beginning in the Southern Song period, Chan reached its apogee, and the critical phrase and the silent illumination methods emerged as its representative styles. In summary, Bodhidharma's entry of principle in the work, *Two Entries and Four Practices*, and Huineng's emphasis on the identity of samādhi and prajñā, are the hallmarks of sudden enlightenment in the Chan tradition. This is the period of "Patriarchal Chan." In truth, this understanding of sudden enlightenment in Chan is not dissimilar to the "contemplation of the inconceivable realm" from the Tiantai work, *Mohe zhiguan (The Great Calming and Contemplation Treatise*).

Q: Shifu, would you please summarize the topic of today's talk on "Chan Buddhism," especially how you define its parameters?

A: Broadly speaking, all forms of Buddhadharma can be said to be Chan Buddhism. "The teachings stem from Chan; from the teachings one realizes Chan." All Buddhadharma is inseparable from the teachings of Chan. Specifically, "Chan Buddhism" refers to the Chinese Chan School; and even though the Chan School encompasses the foundation and essence of the Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna traditions of Buddhism, all of these teachings are precisely the teachings of silent illumination and critical phrase.

Q: Shifu, you have said that the teachings of the Dharma Drum lineage continue that of the *Āgamas*, and what we promote is not traditional Chinese Chan. So my question is, traditional Chan teachings are founded on the Prajñāparamita scriptures. Are the *Prajñāparamita* scriptures part of the Dharma Drum foundation as well, or do we only base our teachings on the *Āgamas*?

A: I did not say that we are not promoting the teachings of the traditional Chan School. Our tradition is different than those supposed Chan teachings that only emphasize empty, extemporaneous dialogues without genuine practice, or heterodox forms of Chan that are not founded on Buddhadharma.

The Chan teachings that we espouse stress the mastery of both practice (zongtong,) and discourse (shuotong). The Chan teachings of Bodhidharma stem from the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra*, which belong to the Tathāgatagarbha system of thought. The Chan teachings of both the fifth and sixth patriarchs come from the *Diamond Sūtra* and stress that the Buddha-nature, or Tathāgatagarbha, is precisely the nature of emptiness emphasized in the Prajñāparamita scriptures.

Q: So we also continue the Prajñāparamita teachings?

A: Yes. The *Āgamas* teach the Dharma of dependent origination. The term "nature of emptiness" is not mentioned. Yet, śunyata is precisely prajñā, and this teaching of the middle way is just a further elaboration of dependent origination. In the *Āgamas* there are passages that explicitly state that one who perceives dependent origination perceives the Dharma; perceiving the Dharma is perceiving Buddha. So what is this Buddha? It is the nature of emptiness, śunyata. That is, the self-nature of all phenomena is intrinsically empty, without permanent, separate existence.

Q: Traditional methods of Chan practice are working on a gong'an or investigating huatou. If we insert the *Āgama* teachings into Chan, will practitioners' outcome of experience be different from that of traditional Chan practitioners?

A: The *Āgamas* do not discuss gong'ans, huatous, silent illumination, or seeing the buddha-nature. The methods of practice in our tradition are huatou and silent illumination, and our guiding view is the buddha-nature. In this sense, these teachings are different than those of the *Āgamas*. But the wellspring of these two Dharma approaches is precisely dependent origination, which is the liberative teaching of impermanence, no-self, and emptiness, as found in the *Āgamas*. Any Buddhist teachings that depart from dependent origination as found in the *Āgamas* (i.e., my understanding of buddha-nature that seeing the Dharma is seeing the Buddha) cannot be considered Buddhadharma. Chinese Chan Buddhism is by nature inclusive and adaptive to the changing needs of people and society. For this reason, Dharma Drum Mountain must be firm in continuing to transmit Chinese Buddhism.

The general teachings set forth in the *Āgamas* are down-

to-earth, geared towards human beings, and are very practical. Yet their gradualistic methods of practice, especially the requirement to first attain dhyāna in order to practice vipaśyanā, are not something that ordinary people in modern times can master. Chan masters of the past have stressed the importance of integrating their practice and realization in the daily activities of carrying water, chopping firewood, drinking, and eating. This development of the Buddha's teaching in China was inevitable; it is also something unique from the *Āgamas*.

---

1 There are various sociological and statistical data. One can be found online here: http://www.adherents.com/Religions_By_Adherents.html, accessed on October 2009.

2 For more detail, see Sheng Yen, *There Is No Suffering: A Commentary on the Heart Sutra* (North Atlantic Books, 2002).

3 All three schools are considered Dharmaguptā school 法藏部 of *vinaya*, which is based upon the precepts in the *Four Part Vinaya*《四分律》. Although there were originally three divisions in China—Southern Mountain or Nanshan lineage 南山宗, the lineage from Xiang Province or Xiangbu 相部宗, and the Eastern Tower lineage or Dongta 東塔宗—the latter two schools disappeared fairly early, leaving only the Nanshan School. Therefore, the *Four Part Vinaya* becomes equivalent with the Nanshan School.

4 For an elaboration on these three systems, see Master Yinshun, *The Way to Buddhahood* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1998), 304-27.

5 See "The Thoughts of the Platform Scripture of the Sixth Patriarch (Liuzutanjing de sixiang)" in *Chan Yu Wu*《禪與悟》(*Chan and Enlightenment*) (Taiwan: Dharma Drum Publications, 1991), 310-18.

About the Author:

Master Sheng Yen

Venerable Chan Master Sheng Yen was one of the twentieth century's foremost Buddhist scholars and meditation masters, and was instrumental in the revival of Chinese Buddhism in modern times.

Venerable Sheng Yen was born into a humble farming family near Shanghai in 1930; he became a novice Buddhist monk at the age of 13. During the Communist takeover of China in 1949, he escaped with the Nationalist army to Taiwan. At the age of 28, after 15 years of strenuous scriptural study and struggle in his meditation work, while sojourning at various monasteries in southern Taiwan, he had one of the deepest spiritual experiences of his life. Soon after, he entered into a solitary six-year meditation retreat to deepen his realization. He later received formal lineage transmission in both the extant lines of Chan (Zen) Buddhism, making him the 57th generation master of the Linji line and the 52nd generation master of the Caodong line of Chan.

In 1969 Venerable Sheng Yen went to Japan to attend graduate school, with the conviction that a strong education would be required to revive Chinese monasticism. In six years he obtained Master's and Doctorate degrees in Buddhist Literature from Rissho University, becoming the first Ph.D. monk in the history of Chinese Buddhism. For the last thirty years of his life, he tirelessly devoted all of his energy to advancing Buddhist education, reviving the tradition of rigorous education for monks and nuns, leading intensive Chan meditation retreats worldwide, engaging in interfaith outreach, and working on behalf of world peace, youth development, and gender equality.

Venerable Sheng Yen passed away peacefully on February 3rd, 2009. He was revered by tens of thousands of students around the world. His wisdom and compassion can be found in his books in Chinese, English, Japanese, and several other languages, and in the teachings of his students and Dharma heirs both in Asia and the West.

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

Books in English by Venerable Master Sheng Yen :

- *Attaining the Way*
- *Catching a Feather on a Fan*
- *Complete Enlightenment*
- *Dharma Drum*
- *Faith in Mind*
- *Footprints in the Snow*
- *Getting the Buddha Mind*
- *Hoofprint of the Ox*
- *Illuminating Silence*
- *Infinite Mirror*
- *Method of No-Method*
- *Setting in Motion the Dharma Wheel*
- *Shattering the Great Doubt*
- *Song of Mind*
- *Subtle Wisdom*
- *The Infinite Mirror*
- *The Poetry of Enlightenment*
- *The Six Paramitas*
- *The Sword of Wisdom*
- *There is No Suffering*
- *Zen Wisdom*
- *Things Pertaining to Bodhi*

DDM Overseas Contact

Center and Office

AMERICA

CHAN MEDITATION CENTER

90-56 Corona Avenue,
Elmhurst, NY 11373, U.S.A.
Tel: 1-718-592-6593
Fax: 1-718-592-0717
Website: www.chancenter.org

DHARMA DRUM RETREAT CENTER

184 Quannacut Road,
Pine Bush, NY 12566, U.S.A.
Tel: 1-845-744-8114
Fax: 1-845-744-8483
Website:
www.dharmadrumretreat.org

DHARMA DRUM MOUNTAIN BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION (D.D.M.B.A.)

North East Region

Long Island Branch, NY

P.O.BOX 423, Upton, NY 11973, U.S.A.
Tel: 1-613-689-8548
Website: longisland.ddmusa.org

Fairfield County Branch, CT

Tel: 1-203- 972-3406
Email: contekalice@aol.com

Hartford Branch, CT

Tel: 1-860-805-3588
Email: ling_yunw@yahoo.com

Burlington Branch, VT

Tel/Fax: 1-802-658-3413
Website: www.ddmbavt.org

Toronto Chapter

154 Poyntz Avenue,
Toronto, ON M2N 1J4, Canada
Tel: 1-416-774-8873
Website: www.ddmba-ontario.ca

Mid-Atlantic Region

New Jersey Chapter

789 Jersey Avenue,
New Brunswick, NJ 08901, U.S.A.
Tel: 1-732-549-7134
Fax: 1-732-957-0563
Website: www.ddmba-nj.org

State College Branch, PA

Tel: 1-814-867-9253
Email: ling_yunw@yahoo.com

South Region

Washington Branch, DC

Tel: 1-301-982-2552
Email: chiehhsiungchang@yahoo.com

Dallas Branch, TX

Tel: 1-817-226-6888
Fax: 1-817- 274-7067
Website: dallas.ddmusa.org

Orlando Branch, FL

Tel: 1-407-671-6250
Website: orlando.ddmusa.org

Tampa Branch, FL

Tel: 1-727-393-9588
Website: tampa.ddmusa.org

Tallahassee Branch, FL

Tel: 1-850-274-3996
Website: www.tallahasseebuddhistcommunity.org

Mid-West Region

Chicago Chapter, IL

1234 North River Road,
Mt Prospect, IL 60056, U.S.A.
Tel/Fax: 1-708-453-2069
Website: www.ddmbachicago.org

Lansing Branch, MI

Tel/Fax: 1-517-332-0003
Website: michigan.ddmusa.org

Street Louise Branch, MO

Tel: 1-636-529-0085
Email: acren@aol.com

West Region

Los Angeles Chapter, CA

9674 Telstar Avenue #C
El Monte, CA 91731, U.S.A.
Tel: 1-626-350-4388
Email: bluebean88@earthlink.net

San Francisco Chapter, CA

1153 Bordeaux Dr., #106
Sunnyvale, CA 94089, U.S.A.
Tel: 1-408-272-9380
Fax: 1-650-988-6928
Website: www.ddmbasf.org

Sacramento Branch, CA

Tel: 1-916-681-2416
Website: sacramento.ddmusa.org

Seattle Chapter, WA

14028 Bel-Red Road, Suite 205
Bellevue, WA 98007, U.S.A.
Tel: 1-414-403-4034
Fax: 1-425-828-2646
Website: seattle.ddmusa.org

DHARMA DRUM MOUNTAIN VANCOUVER CENTER

8240 No.5 Road,
Richmond, B.C. V6Y 2V4, Canada
Tel: 1-604-277-1357
Fax: 1-604-277-1352
Website: www.ddmba.ca

ASIA

DHARMA DRUM MOUNTAIN MALAYSIA CENTER

Block B-3-16, 8 Avenue, Pusat
Perdagangan Sek. 8, Jalan SG. Jernih
46050 Petaling Jaya, Selangor
Tel: 60-3-7960-0841
Fax: 60-3-7960-0842
Website: www.ddm.org.my

Singapore Branch

100A, Duxton Road,
Singapore 089544
Tel: 65-6735-5900
Fax: 65-6224-2655
Email: ddrum@singnet.com.sg

HONG KONG CENTER

Room 203 2/F, Block B, Alexandra
Industrial Bldg. 23-27, Wing Hong Street
Lai Chi Kok, Kowloon
Hong Kong
Tel: 852-2865-3110
852-2295-6623
Fax: 852-2591-4810
Website: www.ddmhk.org.hk

THAILAND CENTER

1471 Soi 31/1 Pattnakarn Road,
10250 Bangkok, Thailand
Tel: 66-2-713-7815~6
Fax: 66-2-713-7638
Website: www.ddmth.com

OCEANIA

Sydney Chapter
Tel: 61-4-1318-5603
Fax: 61-2-9283-3168
Website: www.ddm.org.au

EUROPE

Luxembourg Laison Office
15, Rue Jean Schaack L-2563
Luxembourg
Tel: 352-400-080
Fax: 352-290-311
Email: ddm@chan.lu

Affiliates

Mexico

Mar De Jade Oceanfront Retreat Center
Chacala, Nayarit, Mexico
Contact: Laura del Valle MD
USA phone: 800-257-0532
Mexico phone: 01-800-505-8005
Email: info@mardejade.com
Website: www.mardejade.com

Croatia

Dharmaloka Buddhist Center
Dordiceva 23 10000 Zagreb, Croatia
Tel/Fax: +385-1-481-00-74
Email: info@dharmaloka.org
Website: www.dharmaloka.org

Poland (Warsaw)

Zwiazek Buddystow Czan (Chan Buddhist Union)
Contact:
Pawel Rosciszewski, Beata Kazimierska
Tel/Fax: 22-727-5663
22-620-8446

Switzerland

Teacher: Max Kalin (Guo-yun)
Tel/Fax: 411-382-1676
Email: Maxkalin@chan.ch
Website: www.chan.ch

Hildi Thalmann Haus Sein
Bruungasse 16 CH3011 Bern,
Switzerland
Tel: 31-352-2243
Email: hthalmann@gmx.net

United Kingdom

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

Western Chan Fellowship
Contact: Simon Child, secretary
24 Woodgate Avenue,
Bury Lancashire, BL9 7RU, U. K.
Email:
secretary@westernchanfellowship.org
Website:
www. westernchanfellowship.org

Pocket Guides to Buddhist Wisdom E-13

The Dharma Drum Lineage of Chan Buddhism: Inheriting the Past and Inspiring the Future

Translators: Guogu (Jimmy Yu) and Wee Keat Ng
Editor: Harry Miller and David Berman
Publisher: Sheng Yen Education Foundation

Publisher: Sheng Yen Education Foundation
Address: 2F., No. 48-6, Section 2, Ren-ai Road, Taipei 10056, Taiwan
(Post Code: 10056)
URL: http://www.shengyen.org.tw
Tel: +886-2-2397-9300
Fax: +886-2-2397-5610
Direct Line for Free Booklet Department: +886-2-2397-5156~7

To promote wisdom and compassion in our world,
The Sheng Yen Education Foundation is delighted to make this and other booklets available for free distribution around the world.
The Foundation gratefully acknowledges all those who generously contributed to the publishing and distribution of this booklet.
Donations to assist additional printings are welcome.
Your contributions may be sent to the Sheng Yen Education Foundation at the above address.

For Free Distribution
1st Edition: November 2010
2st Edition: April 2011
ISBN: 978-986-6443-16-9

Copyright © Dharma Drum Mountain 2010
All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced without permission in writing from the publisher.