

# 聖嚴法師與禪宗之現代化建構

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在漢傳佛教界，已故的聖嚴慧空法師是受人景仰的佛教教育家，為禪宗臨濟與曹洞兩脈的傳人，及漢傳佛教中新成立的「中華禪法鼓宗」的創始者。法鼓宗結合了聖嚴法師所承襲的臨濟與曹洞兩脈。新建立的法鼓宗，最顯著的特色就是以人倫教育為重心，這也是二十及二十一世紀台灣漢傳佛教的特色。這種對教育的重視，很明顯的是受到民國政府時期（1912-1949）佛教的改革和思想家的影響而產生的。聖嚴法師所教的現代化禪法，雖與民國初期的諸多先賢密不可分，但也是包含了教導西方學生的親身經驗，以及應對台灣環境所做的回應之中演變而來。他的禪法是以《阿含經》與傳統禪法中的戒定慧三學為基礎，整合後再重新建構起來。重新建構的目的是要確保漢傳佛教在現代的存續，過程是複雜而漸進的。這整個過程是漢傳佛教發展上的典範蛻變。雖然他是從前人得到啟發，但他的建構有其獨特之處，非當代之人所能及之。這篇論文的主旨，是回溯他建構禪法的歷史因緣、教法要義以及法鼓宗的核心特質。

## 不離教理的禪法建構

為了瞭解中華禪法鼓宗的意義與目的，必須先去了解，相對於與其時間上最接近的前人，聖嚴法師在知識與宗教層面是甚麼立場。他固然繼承了開始於民國初



期的佛教現代化運動的遺緒，但他更感興趣的是如何去實踐這些思想與改革，才能使佛教在全球興盛起來。對這個意識到的危機，他的解決辦法，就是他的宏觀願景及重整漢傳佛教的最上法——禪法。然而這項重建的歷史過程很複雜，無法具體的追溯到他某一個計畫或決擇，只是對所看到的佛教問題隨順著因緣做出回應。從禪法的親身體驗、睿智多聞的前輩教示中及對教育的關切下，他逐步建構出一個可行之久遠的現代佛教形態。

## 以先賢為典範

幾位中世（唐宋）及晚期帝國（明）時期的佛教大師，影響了聖嚴法師的思想。他持續地向祖師們取法，藉以建立明確清晰的教法。這些偉大禪師們的共同處，都是對漢傳佛教有重大貢獻，

及造就漢傳佛教發展脈絡的重要人物。他們的言行中，都體現出「解行並重」的理念。這些人物包括禪宗第六代祖師曹溪惠能（638-713）、他的弟子荷澤神會（668-760），以及神會禪法的第五代傳人，也是華嚴宗祖師的圭峯宗密（780-841）。

如果將宋朝祖師列入，那麼還包括聖嚴法師最常引述的宏智正覺禪師（1091-1157）和大慧宗杲禪師（1089-1163）。這兩位是創新禪宗修行方法的人物，而從其語錄可見他們博通經教。這兩位禪師的影響，在隨後的中國、韓國、日本的禪宗宗派最為顯著。聖嚴法師對這些祖師的著作都寫過評註，也投入很多時間，深入地研究明末清初蕩益智旭大師（1599-1655）融合諸宗的思想。透過蕩益大師，他瞭解了天台與其他佛教諸宗的教法。

聖嚴法師認為所謂的創新，在中國佛教而言，須看僧侶們是否能重新詮釋佛法法義，並將佛法與外教融會綜合，產生新意。他說：「佛教之所以停滯下來，是因為它停止吸收外部的思想與觀念系統。」過去的祖師大德之所以能夠有所創新的建立新的教理、思想，就是因為吸收了儒道思想的精華。宗密的《原人論》是佛教判教的入門書，在對此論的評註中，聖嚴法師說：

在中國，對於宗密提倡三教融合論的《原人論》，雖然研究弘傳的人不多，但在論主的五教判之中，納入人天教，並收攝儒、道二教，影響卻極深遠，乃至到了二十世紀的太虛大師，將佛法判為五乘三等：五乘共法、三乘共法、大乘不共法，於五乘中，皆以人天乘為基礎；太虛大師所說「人成即佛成」之思想，亦以此為著眼點，似乎即是受到《原人論》五教判的影響，這不也就是我們提倡人間佛教及人

間淨土的先驅嗎？

在這裡聖嚴法師強調宗密的判教的創見與思想融合，而判教是中國佛教的特色之一。判教是中國佛教徒用來整理排呈諸多佛法教理的體系，呈列出每一教理是為克服前一層次教理某種缺失的方便法，同時指出更上一層超越於它的教理。以這種方式，就可建立層次分明的教理結構，由最基礎的到最高深的，一層一層的向上提昇。

宗密體系的獨到之處，在於他是第一位意圖將中國固有的儒、道學說納入佛教的釋經判教之中，將其他體系的思想適用到佛教來。必須特別強調的是，聖嚴法師很重視宗密將《原人論》一文寫得淺顯易懂，讓一般人容易親近，不忽視佛教之外的中國本土各家學說，而是兼容並蓄的將它們涵括進來，建立了新型態的中國佛教。在知見上與佛法脈絡上，聖嚴法師似乎與宗密是一脈相承的，因為其師承太虛大師也是受到宗密的啟發。

為了發展一種能見證佛法教儀的實用禪法，聖嚴法師從六祖慧能的弟子神會禪師的著作中取法。他說：

神會禪師（668-760）對於中國禪宗的貢獻，扮演著承先啟後的角色，六祖圓寂後，弟子雖多，能夠通宗通教，飽覽儒道群書，深入三藏教誨，熱心國事安危的大師像神會這樣的人，則不做第二位想。

聖嚴法師不僅敬仰神會是佛學淵博又積極入世的禪師，也讚嘆他弘傳佛法智慧所扮演的角色。這樣的尊崇只有在經歷了聖嚴法師實踐佛法的用心和努力下才能體會。舉例而言，他說：「自古以來，『從禪出教』，『藉教悟宗』，是相互為用的。唯有真的實踐，始能產生真智慧，而為大眾說出究竟清淨的不思議法，也唯有依靠正確的教義指導，始能實踐正法，而

明其自心見其本性。」他也提到中華禪法鼓宗的任務在於「承先啟後」。

聖嚴法師之所以讚嘆神會，是因為其禪法是《六祖壇經》的入門要領。某些學者議論說《六祖壇經》出自神會之手。在這裡我們不討論此經文的出處。不管作者是誰，壇經在塑造後來禪宗的發展以及聖嚴法師對禪的瞭解上都極其重要。在神會的〈顯宗記〉的註解序言中，聖嚴法師說：「這冊講錄的寫成……使我從禪宗的角度，來看整體的佛法，就像是寫了一冊禪學的佛法概論。」

在西方因為許多早期的學術與流行的佛學著作，都受到日本禪的宗派意識的影響，所以神會通常未被視為禪宗的代表人物。一般人所想像的禪宗是超脫形式及教義，只著重於開悟的體驗。在這樣的認知之下，神會當然不會符合禪的印象。然而晚近的學術研究，卻顯示如此的印象，主要是來自於禪佛教傳入西方的過程（主要是由日本傳入），及西方是如何的研究佛教的影響。事實上，儘管禪宗自稱為「教外別傳，不立文字」，然而在中國大多數有影響力的禪師，都博覽群籍、精通

佛教義理。聖嚴法師特別舉出神會做為一位解行並重的典範，並沒有甚麼不尋常之處——這正是禪宗千餘年來在中國實行的情況。不過聖嚴法師強調解行不可分離，正是對他所目睹的美國與日本禪所持有的態度的一種矯正。

## 聖嚴思想的形成因緣

為了要體會聖嚴法師的禪法教學，最主要的必須探究，是哪些因緣培養並形成了他對佛法的理解。他強調教理與實修、理解與方法必須並重，這是由他早年研究初期佛教而來的。他將初期佛教融合於漢傳佛教和利他的菩薩道，是源自於他在日本的經歷。他的禪師生涯開始於美國，並繼續不斷的成長演變，直到他去世為止。他弘揚禪法，是因為希望弘揚漢傳佛教。禪法不過是他的入口通路，用以重建一個有用、適合於現代社會的漢傳佛教。

促成聖嚴法師的思想與教法的長期發展過程的因緣固然複雜，我們仍可辨認出此一發展的三個概略的階段。這些階段是在約六十年的時間內演變發展，而他的禪



法教授是歷經嘗試錯誤而演變出來的。

他在1961-1969年（27至39歲）之間的早期著作，顯示他對佛教的理解，幾乎完全依據阿含經典及律典。我將這個時期稱為學思發展的形成期。在這十三年之中，他出版了十一本書，其中兩本是比較宗教學的著作（比較佛教和基督教，1956及1967年出版）。他說他寫這些比較宗教作品，是為了回應基督教對佛教的批評。

對這些批判的回應，也激勵他省察與檢視整體佛法的基礎。此一時期的其他著作，還有他仔細研讀以阿含經典為代表的原始佛教教義，所寫出的兩本影響最為深廣的作品，即1956年印行的《戒律學綱要》與《正信的佛教》。這兩本書代表了他對佛教教理的理解的基礎。後來他對禪的詮釋，是奠基於他生命中這一段形成期。

聖嚴法師在日本攻讀博士學位的時期，對佛教的了解，漸漸從初期佛教轉移到後來的漢傳大乘佛教。我將這段時期（1969-1975）稱為他的學思發展的融合期。這段期間對他產生了三項影響：他在日本的親身經歷，啟發他立志提昇漢傳佛教徒的教育水準；在對藕益大師做深入研究之後，他對漢傳大乘佛教的了解改變了；他也接觸到以前所未知悉的佛教型態。

雖然他深知太虛大師致力於設立佛學院，但這與他在日本實際目睹辦學優良的佛學院時，是無法相比的。同時他也體認到，試圖將漢傳佛教與現代教育體系融合時，所面臨的艱鉅任務。他決心要提升漢傳佛教徒的教育水準。

聖嚴法師日本的留學，形成了他對漢傳佛教教理的理解，也讓他思考要如何建構適應現代社會的佛法。他1971年的碩士論文《大乘止觀法門之研究》，是研究慧思禪師對教理與修行的綜合。這為聖嚴法師提供了一張地圖——從如來藏思想體系

的觀點——如何將佛教理論落實，達到體證。

這篇論文的影響，可以在聖嚴法師後來對禪的詮釋看得出來，那是與如來藏思想的理論有關的。他研究藕益智旭的博士論文《明末中國佛教の研究》，1975年出版，對他的思想的影響深遠。尤其是聖嚴法師認為，藕益大師對同樣的佛教衰敗危機做出回應。面對著當時社會政治的挑戰，藕益大師尋求融合及再詮釋各種佛教教理的方法，特別是天台的學說，以強化漢傳佛教。對那些誤解和誤用佛教的佛教徒以及外教的挑戰，藕益大師疾言厲色地回應，是道道地地的衛道護教勇士。他對禪法之誤用，回應尤其強烈。

藕益大師因為看到了當時禪宗的種種問題，所以遠離嗣承任何禪宗的法派，即使他自己在早期是修學禪法的。聖嚴法師對藕益大師的認同，在他回應他所見到的當代漢傳佛教危機，及日本禪各種悖離事實的言論可以看得出來。

此外，聖嚴法師也說藕益大師的《教觀綱宗》，對他的影響極大，尤其是該書的中國佛教教理的整體架構。聖嚴法師對此著作的研究及註釋，使他領會到教理與修行合一的重要，亦即天台所說的教觀合一，並將此觀念融入他對禪的理解之中。

聖嚴法師目睹了日本佛教學術研究的旺盛活力。在佛教歷史上，尤其是漢傳佛教史上，佛教透過理論的演變及社會運動，面對政治、社會的挑戰時，做了回應。他在這方面的了解顯示在他此一時期的其他著作中，其中一本是出版於1969年的《世界佛教通史》，另外一本是翻譯數人合著，1971年出版的關於中國佛教歷史的《仏教史概説・中国篇》，聖嚴法師將此書取名為《中國佛教史概説》。這兩本書，尤其是第二本，加強了他對中國佛教發展的認識。他說：

注意戒律的人，自然而然會注意（佛教）歷史。研究戒律，事實上不能離開歷史。戒律的本身，是關係僧團的活動，僧團活動的延續，就是佛教的歷史。……我本人，不算是律師，也不是史學家。只是，在發現近代佛教衰微的原因之後，就想溫故知新，希望從歷史的軌跡，得到啟發，如何來開創明日佛教的前途。

在實踐的層次上，聖嚴法師看到了日本人如何重新詮釋佛教，並將不同形式的佛教融入他們的社會。整體說來，聖嚴法師感到又歡喜又驚奇，親眼看到各種新興佛教宗派「提倡把佛法融入到現代社會裏，並帶領青年、婦女團體，以及不同年齡的團體，舉辦適合會員參加的特別活動」的做法。他也惋惜「傳統佛教並沒有這樣的做法。新興宗教的傳教方式像基督教一樣，挨家挨戶去敲各家的門來接引人。」

在他研究所學業的空檔，他前往各種不同的佛教團體，參加、觀察他們的修行活動。他參加了各種宗派的精進修行活動，包括日本禪、真言、日蓮正宗。他甚至參加和觀察各種新興宗教的活動。最後

他定著在伴鐵牛老師（1910-1996）的禪法。伴鐵牛與新成立的三寶教團有其淵源，因為他也是原田祖岳（1871-1961）的弟子。原田祖岳的另一位弟子安谷白雲，於1954年創立了三寶教團。學者們強調過這個新宗派的爭議性。但是在此該注意的是，這個宗派的明顯特色，就是強調融合臨濟與曹洞的修行方法。不同宗派間的門戶界限在日本佛教界是很強烈的，甚至在禪宗內的不同派別之間也是如此。

一個宗派結合兩個風格截然不同的禪宗法派，在日本是前所未聞的。雖然我尚未找到聖嚴法師就三寶教團對他的教法的影響的直接陳述，但極為可能的是，聖嚴法師自己對話頭與默照禪法的結合，與他從伴鐵牛之處所學的有其關聯。這一點我底下會再談到。

這些日本的經歷，讓聖嚴法師瞭解了漢傳佛教的歷史發展及教理之豐富，並留下了不可磨滅的印記。日本人表達佛教在現代生活裡的教育、社會、精神之角色，也對他有所啟發。他盡可能的吸收一切。這些經驗的衝擊，在他於1975年12月接受美國佛教會創辦人沈家禎博士的邀請，擔任紐約布朗克斯區大覺寺住持時，開始綻



2008年來自西方的禪修信眾與師父合影。  
Practitioners from the West Show Respects to Master Sheng Yen.

放出美麗的花朵。在他人生的下個階段，也就是1976-2009年（47-79歲）——我稱之為聖嚴法師思想趨於圓熟的年代——他開始緩慢地建構、闡述一種以修行為導向，迎合現代人需要的漢傳佛教。

意想不到的因緣使聖嚴法師成為一位「禪師」。他來到美國，是因為台灣佛教界許多法師帶著懷疑的眼光看他。在二十多歲的年紀時，聖嚴法師經常大聲疾呼，批評傳統形態的漢傳佛教。或許是因為這個理由，一旦聖嚴法師離開到日本留學，各寺廟都不希望他再回來。大部分佛教僧侶滿足於佛教當時的現狀。在取得博士學位後不久，聖嚴法師回台灣參加一項會議。在那裡他覺得「像考取了駕駛執照的人，卻沒有車子可開。」當他在會議結束後回到日本時，接到沈家禎居士來函邀請他到美國傳授佛法。12月10日聖嚴法師抵達了紐約，就此開啟他生命中新的一頁。

在幾位美國青年的要求下，聖嚴法師開始教授禪法。他說：「美國人重實際，求速效，最好的辦法是要他們修密持咒、學禪打坐……我也用我在中國大陸和臺灣山中所用所學的禪修方法，以及在日本所見的禪修形式，在美國開始向西方人傳授禪的觀念和打坐的方法。就這樣，我便從一位新出道的文學博士，變成了傳授禪法的禪師。如此快速地改行，是我從來沒有想到的事。」

## 聖嚴法師禪法的演變

聖嚴法師做為一位禪師的生涯，始於1976年初期他開始在美國主持的精進禪七。後來從1978年起，他也開始在台灣帶領禪七。在十年不到的時間內，他已在歐洲及世界各地主持精進禪七了。可是他的禪法在嘗試與錯誤中持續不斷地演變。演變的過程可分為四個時期：教授禪法初期、實驗時期、改良兩種禪法時期、及最

後以禪法為教育時期。在最後這一時期，他開始在台灣將他的禪法，應用到辦教育、社會、慈善事業等更廣泛的志趣上，將他的理念落實到現代生活的實際問題及社會問題上。禪的原則引導著他致力於繼之而起的各種志業建設，以實現他「建設人間淨土」的理念。底下所述是這個過程的概貌，絕不是完整無遺的研究。需要進一步的研究，才能將其禪法發展的階段更精確地呈現出來。

## 教授禪法的初期

聖嚴法師的禪師生涯開始於美國。他的第一批美國學生包括研究生、藝術家、教師、及愛好武術的人士。他稱為「禪修特別班」的禪坐訓練班，首次於1976年5月3日舉辦。他教的方法是數息，只有四位學生。可是不到一年，聖嚴法師的團體已經有20位學生，並且已開始在長島的菩提精舍舉辦禪七。他們對他所教的任何東西都開放地接受、學習，而聖嚴法師則運用自己在台灣山中閉關時累積的經驗。他的禪七模式，是他在日本的伴鐵牛座下參學時觀察得來的。從每段打坐開始及結束、如何進入小參室、慢步經行與快步跑香等他所採用的相關信號和規矩，便可得知。可是聖嚴法師在此一時期的應機示教、揮灑自如的禪風，使他的禪法別具一格。

聖嚴法師的論文研究對象藕益大師，對背離佛法根本原則，懵懂無知的修行者多所批評。研究藕益影響了聖嚴法師教禪的方式，因為他強調佛法基本的戒定慧三學不可分離。聖嚴法師的禪是傳統的，因為它使用諸如話頭等頓悟的禪法；它也是非傳統的，因為它不像一般認知中的宋朝以前所傳授的理想化、不落階級、不論方法的祖師禪。他提供一套清楚明白的修行路徑，並將佛法的正知見，融入他應機直入的禪七開示之中。

在他的一次「禪修特別班」之中，他對學生宣稱：「我現在所教的禪修，不同於目前日本禪堂裡和中國佛寺中所教的。我稱之為『禪』，是為了配合當前美國對這一名詞的用法。可是我傳授的，事實上是佛陀所教的修行方法。這是使大家悟入佛陀智慧的大乘法門。」聖嚴法師所教的是融會性的、系統次第性的實用法門，目標在實證空性或「無」，如禪宗語錄中一再提到的。在早期的禪七開示中，聖嚴法師形容「無」說：

禪，本來是直指人心之本源的無上真理，它不否定什麼，也不肯定什麼，更不必用語言文字來表達它，即使用盡了一切語文的表達方式，也無法把禪這樣東西表達出來。因為禪是超越了一切知識、思想、邏輯、觀念、符號的實在。你可以稱它為空，但不是什麼也沒有的空，你可以稱它為有，又不等於常識世界的有。它是視之無色、聽之無聲、嗅之無味、捉摸之無感觸、嚐之亦無滋味的存在，但又未嘗離開我們日常所處的世界。所以它是到處都有、時時都有、人人本有的。

聖嚴法師教導說，禪既不離於世界萬物，也不同於一般的存在。修行的要旨，不在求得甚麼樣的開悟，而是在解脫煩惱的束縛。當煩惱消失了，覺悟的智慧心自然顯現。為了證得此一智慧，聖嚴法師並未建立固定不變的教法或方法。然而他的確闡述了修行過程中明確不同的階段。他對美國流行的，強調破除偶像，以公案修行為重心的禪法，敬而遠之。他闡明所有修行人為了體悟禪，都必須經過的三個階段。一般人的心在未修行之前，通常很散亂。他們的自我感都局限於自己的身體、觀念、想法，繞著它們打轉。在修行之後，就進入第一階段，身心和諧而穩定，這是要靠修行達到的。第二階段是能所的統一，也就是修行者達到了與整個環境或

宇宙合一的大我境界；有些宗教認定這是神性的最高境界，或是與上帝合一。第三階段是連這個統一的自我也放下。只有在達到統一心時才有可能體驗到第三階段，稱為「無」或「無心」的境界，體證無我的智慧。有時聖嚴法師把這三階段擴充為四階段：散亂心、集中心、統一心、無心。

將禪修劃分為這三或四階段，在傳統禪宗祖師的禪法或當代同輩的教法中，都是前所未有的。現代世界中，沒有人曾以這個方式來呈現禪，美國當時最著名的禪的倡導者鈴木大拙當然沒有，建立美國第一座禪寺的鈴木俊隆（1904-1971）也沒有，在美國繁衍出許多禪宗派別的前角博雄（1931-1995）也沒有，以及據稱是美國當代最著名的禪法教師菲利浦·凱普樓等等也不曾有過。凱普樓是安谷老師的弟子，屬於三寶教團法派，所教的是一種結合曹洞與臨濟方法的禪。可是在他們的體系內，並沒有將修行有系統的分類為幾個階次。

在早期的禪七裡，聖嚴法師提倡以參「無」的話頭做為方法，引導禪眾從統一心，進而一瞥無心或無我的體驗。在禪七時他把這些方法交給心力夠專注的禪眾去使用。參話頭的方法並不是在公開的場合，而是在小參時個別教授的。第一次禪七在1977年5月12至19日舉行。禪眾使用各種不同的方法先把心安定下來，然後進一步用參話頭的方法。每個人各有不同的話頭。聖嚴法師在經行時也會信手拈來，即席使用機鋒，或突然叫一位學生出來逼問，要他回答一個沒意味的問題，迫使他產生「疑情」。

話頭是禪宗公案中的一個關鍵句。公案通常是與某一禪悟經驗有關事件的記錄。此外，話頭也可能源自某一現實的生活情況。參究話頭或公案，主要是要激起一種實存的兩難困境，及解決問題的迫切

渴望。禪宗傳統所稱的「疑情」越強烈，豁然省悟的突破也更大。在統一心的狀況下，疑團突然粉碎，所有執著都放下，自我也消失無蹤。當任何執著都沒有了，就會體驗到無我。

可是聖嚴法師將「活的」與死的公案或話頭做了區別。一個話頭只有在融入參禪者的生命，或是從真實生活中生起的，才會「活過來」。甚至，聖嚴法師也將話頭劃分為從深到淺的幾個層次，因此不同話頭的使用，也有幾個不同的證悟層次。

在早期的禪七，他通常將學生帶入活生生的狀況，促使他們洞見無我的智慧。在《禪雜誌》與他的《佛心眾生心》一書中，刊出了幾篇禪七心得報告。這些見證詳細述說了聖嚴法師與打七學生間活潑的互動，以及學生所獲得的體驗。

一項該注意的特色是，聖嚴法師並未以日本禪師系統化教授話頭及公案的方式，來教參話頭的方法。在日本臨濟宗中興之祖白隱慧鶴（1686-1769）的影響之下，日本禪的修行變成一套包括特定數目公案的課程，在課程當中習禪的學生必須通過這些公案的勘驗。

可是，習禪的學生通常被要求與所參

的公案合為一體，俾能達到統一的境界。即使在今天，日本臨濟宗或三寶教團宗派，也鮮少有提及從參話頭或參公案而發起疑情的。聖嚴法師從他處汲取如何運用話頭的靈感。我猜想這是來自他個人閉關的體驗、向靈源禪師問參的經驗、閱讀中國禪師的著作，以及日本對這些著作的學術研究。

可是似乎在1979年時，他就已經在建構他自己的禪修次第體系，區分禪修為「世間禪」、「出世間禪」、「世出世間禪」等三個階次。

聖嚴法師在早期的禪七教授了許多其他方法。有個禪七學員說，他每次打禪七都會接受一個不同的方法。在聖嚴法師生平第一次主持的禪七，那個學員在心足夠安定之後，接受了「什麼是無？」的方法。在第二次禪七，聖嚴法師叫他只是不起雜念的時時觀照著，而不專注於任何東西。這個方法當時沒有給名字，後來他才知道這就是默照法門。在第三次禪七，聖嚴法師要他做「白骨觀」的觀想，就是觀想自己身體腐敗、壞爛，最後變成一堆白骨。這種觀法在傳統上是「五停心觀」中的一種。在接下來的禪七，聖嚴法師教他





用與觀世音菩薩有關的觀聲音的方法，也就是「觀音法門」。在每次禪七中，聖嚴法師時時刻刻繼續突如其來的將學生帶入參究「活公案」的情境，逼迫他們回答，幫助他們獲得突破性的經驗。

另外不同於日本禪的教法是，聖嚴法師將禪的修行展現為不離佛法的戒定慧三學。這個架構是在禪七當中及禪七以外的場合都有建立的。舉例而言，禪七當中所教的懺悔法門，是放在遵守戒律與道德原則的規範之下。在他的第一次「禪修特別班」，他不只教禪坐，也教基本的佛法。

在他於週日上午講《六祖壇經》的開示中，他所強調的不僅是禪師破除偶像的舉動，還有娑婆世界的理論基礎、智慧的重要性、自性與煩惱的關係。同時聖嚴法師也開辦長達十週的初級禪訓班，內容涵蓋佛教教理及禪坐。在定期的週日講經開示中，他對《六祖壇經》、《心經》、《圓覺經》等經典做正式的闡釋。

在禪七開示中，聖嚴法師強調參禪必須具備的條件，例如對自己、方法、及老師的大信心、度化一切眾生與成佛的大願心、投入修行的大精進心及參話頭過程中要發起的大疑情。但是這些教法總是適切的放在利益眾生的一般大乘修行的內容中。他在第一次禪七中教導緩慢的拜懺，當作一項輔助方法，這是終其一生教授禪法，唯一保持一貫不變的方法。這樣的方法一般在其他禪宗道場並沒有教導，歷史上禪宗的記載裡也沒談到。

這個修行法是來自他在台灣的六年閉關經驗。懺悔拜佛的方法及發願，與中國天台宗的宗教儀式傳統有歷史上的淵源。這些宗教儀式的修行法門，包括緊密地配合著祈禱文唱誦的跪拜，以消除精進修行禪定時遭遇的障礙。聖嚴法師自己在閉關的初期也做拜懺的修行。藕益大師也提倡這個修行法門。

同樣的，聖嚴法師在禪七之中也教懺

悔禮拜，做為清除心垢的方法。禪眾們不必唱誦，只是認知自己在修行路上累積了眾多業障，真心地慚愧懺悔。當禪眾跪拜時，聖嚴法師會數說大家的言行不一致，又是如何的自傷傷人。很多人流下了慚愧的眼淚，之後禪眾的心就會安定下來。後來聖嚴法師也把這個方法加以次第化，分為幾個階段，從最淺的懺悔層次，到較深層次的統一心或禪定，溶入他的四階段的修心層次。

## 實驗時期

1970年代的精進禪七較為靈活應機。可是自1980年起，聖嚴法師開始每年定期主持四次禪七。他在紐約市的艾姆赫斯特買進一棟房子，不過房子破舊失修。直到1981年5月東初禪寺才整修完成，聖嚴法師這才能夠為他的學生們開辦更多課程。他教得越多，他的教法就愈清楚、愈有組織。他也探究了許多其他不同的禪修方法，希望將自己的教法系統化。

聖嚴法師對修行方法的探究，促使他在1980年出版了一本蒐羅諸多禪師教法的選集（譯者按，即《禪門修証指要》），始於菩提達摩（第6世紀），結束於晚近的大師虛雲老和尚（1839-1959），也就是他自己的師祖。在該書的序言裡，他駁斥了「禪不立文字」的誤解。他指出學禪必須要知道禪是戒定慧三學的一部分。在1984年他擴充「禪」的廣義為禪觀，並編輯了另一本選集《禪門驪珠集》，囊括諸多代表中國佛教禪觀傳統的法師的教法。禪宗及非禪宗的祖師都收錄在此一冊中。此書收集了所有聖典中111位禪觀祖師的論述資料。它顯示了這些大師對修行所認知的價值與思想的演變。在1987年一本選自前述第一本書（譯者按，即《禪門修証指要》）的禪師著作，取名為《證道歌》的書，以英文出版了。

這些作品背後的認知與目的是一致的，聖嚴法師想要矯正他所看到的同時代人物所教的偏頗型態的禪法。他們過度強調舊公案的研讀及尋求開悟，卻沒有前述的三學基礎。相反的，他以選出111位大師，來強調禪的多元化，並顯示禪的修行並沒有固定不變的教法或途徑。

同時所有的修行法門都不離異於以佛法為基礎，來培養正確的知見、心態及方法。他在《證道歌》裡說道：

普通對禪的看法是，禪的經驗是無法形容的，因此建議大家儘管以參公案做為修行。這些詩歌的目的不一樣，因為它們具體的告訴你如何修行、培養甚麼態度、以及留心甚麼陷阱。最後，它們描寫那言語難以形容的禪的經驗。

的確，聖嚴法師並不怯於向自己的學生闡明和介紹禪修的觀念架構。正見比盲修瞎鍊更重要。他是個多產的作家，並鼓勵自己的學生，將自己的體驗用文字闡述，刊登在《禪雜誌》上。

在1976年抵達美國之後的一年內，他開辦了《禪雜誌》，將他的開示聽打稿及他的學生所寫的心得報告編輯刊出。又在1979年創辦禪通訊，內容包括他的開示編輯文稿、新聞事項、活動預告，以及以往只見諸中文的其他禪法著述。他繼續以中文著述，從各方面闡明佛法。聖嚴法師顯示，禪完全不離於佛教留傳下來的豐富典籍及教理。他詳盡說明修行之路的次第、多樣而複雜的修行方法，以及經典中所蘊含的微妙教理體系。對他而言，「禪的修行，並無定法，若得明師指點，一切方法均可匯歸禪門。」當他邊教邊寫，他也開始將自己的教法系統化。

聖嚴法師在禪七裡私下教了許多不同的方法。可是在1980年代後期，他把通常被視為「禪」的方法的範圍擴大了。他將佛教聖典裡豐富的教法，介紹給學生。在

這期間聖嚴法師開始為紐約的學生，開辦有關於禪坐的「週三中階禪修特別班」；在上課中他介紹了經典與禪宗語錄裡描述各種禪修及觀法。它們包括他以前教過的默照，以及觀心法門、捨的方法、慈悲觀等。到了1998年他已教了很多出自經典的方法，中階班教授的有明月三昧、海印三昧等許多的方法，這些課程並沒全部編輯刊出，他所教的基本觀呼吸方法則仍然繼續著。

舉例來說，「海印三昧」的方法，是許多人用過和喜愛的法門。「海印」是開悟的體驗，一切現象融通相即、彼此無礙。那是遍含一切諸法的境界。在華嚴經裡說到，佛恆常處於此三昧之中。它的意義固然有種種註釋或說明，可是做為一個禪修方法，經典中卻極少提及。在整個佛教三藏典籍中只有一處提到實際修行此一法門的，是十三世紀的蒙山德異（1232-?）法師。不過對這方法本身的描述還是付之闕如。聖嚴法師似乎依照他自己由華嚴經註釋得來的理解，來教授這個方法。他解釋這方法為一種觀想法，用功時要觀想自身以及外境（例如自己可能遭遇的問題），為浩瀚無邊的海洋上的水泡。從海洋的角度來看，這些水泡是如此的渺小，而只是佛性的短暫顯現，完全不構成任何問題。他特別強調，當我們在日常生活中遭逢困境時，這個方法很實用。

這些及其他方法代表聖嚴法師禪法教學的實驗期。有時他在禪七期間傳授給學生當作方法，有時卻又當作觀點來傳授，特別是讓學生在遭逢困境時可以採用。可是到了1990年代中期，已經不再有人真正在使用這些方法了。理由之一是，聖嚴法師開始鼓勵弟子們專門修習默照與話頭的方法。

## 改良兩種禪法的時期

聖嚴法師禪法的演變，是許多不同因素造成的。首先，聖嚴法師是對傳統禪法缺乏組織次第做出回應。他開始認識到，那些過份著重公案裡禪師們的怪異行徑的學生所產生的問題。其次，自1989年起，在他的弟子約翰·克魯克要求下，他開始到英國主持「曹洞式」的禪七。約翰·克魯克在跟隨聖嚴法師修禪之前，一直修習藏傳的「大手印」和日本的「只管打坐」。約翰的許多學生也修只管打坐。因此從第二次的英國禪七開始，聖嚴法師專門教導禪眾默照的方法。隨側的出家侍者在此時期修持默照的經驗，也讓他再三教授默照的方法。因此，到了1990年代中期，默照的方法開始變得更系統化。

聖嚴法師早年教導禪眾的方式，與他在1980年代末期及1990年代的教法大不相同。早年每個學生各自修各自的方法。在禪七當中並沒有公開討論方法。可是到了1990年代初期，大家都先從觀呼吸法入手，一旦心夠安定了，聖嚴法師會叫禪眾用話頭或默照，有時會叫他們用「週三中階禪修特別班」所教的一種方法。這通常會發生在禪七的第四天。這個模式一直持續到1997年底，聖嚴法師才在弟子的請求下開始帶領分開專修的「默照禪七」及「話頭禪七」。學員們覺得最好每次禪七只專門修習一種方法，才能夠深入那個法門。否則到了第四天學員才開始用話頭或默照方法時，接著沒幾天，禪七就結束了。

如前所述，聖嚴法師第一次介紹默照的方法是在美國最早期禪七之中。宋朝的宏智正覺（1091-1157）教授默照的方法，不過在幾代之後，就在中國的禪宗傳統中銷聲匿跡了。聖嚴法師被認為是此方法的復興者。這是他在閉關時發現並修習的方法之一。他曾經說過，他只是坐著，沒有

方法，心不住於任何處，但是對所有現象清清楚楚。後來當他讀到宏智禪師的教法時，才知道自己修習的是甚麼。聖嚴法師首次教默照的情形是這樣子的，沒有階段：

默照其實是最直接的方法，因為禪不是可以用心去思考的，也不是可以用任何語言文字形容的。這個方法就是根本不要你用任何方法來修行。沒有方法就是方法……默照的方法是當你的心不存有任何念頭的時候，就在那當下，放下所有一切，那就是禪的境界。默並不是睡著了，那就是為什麼「默」之後要有「照」，也就是心要很清楚明白。

聖嚴法師也對此方法做出警告：

在開始的階段，修習者必須在寧靜安詳的地方修行。那是為甚麼一般的曹洞宗修行者偏好在山中修行，離開人群越遠越好，在中國與在日本都是這樣子。因為這緣故，默照這個方法可能不適合於大多數人，因為在現代社會裡，很難要求每個修行者都跑到山裡去。所以我個人很少用這方法來教別人，至少在開始的階段。我只教少數一些人用這個方法。這方法有另一個缺點。如果修行者方法用得不對，他的心可能一片空白，而以為這就是「默」。如果是這樣，他修行永遠不會得力。

聖嚴法師說默照是個隱喻的方法，因此它「也許不適合於大多數人」。如一位學生的回憶（見上述），默照是個無形無相、沒有方法的方法。這位學生被教導要清楚知道周圍所發生的一切事情，而心中不起任何妄念。當《佛心眾生心》在1980年出版時，書中聖嚴法師評論南宋默照禪的倡導者宏智禪師所寫的〈默照銘〉，喚起了人們對默照的興趣。1980年11月聖嚴法師接受了WBAI廣播電台雷克斯·西克生有關默照的訪問。

然而值得注意的是，在1980年代晚期，可能在他的中階禪訓班課程當中，他開始將此方法廣泛的傳授給許多人，澄清默照的微妙「階段」及提出具體的「方法」，讓修行者在用這個「無法之法」時有所憑藉。第一次將默照方法系統化呈現為三個階段（觀身體、觀心、悟境）的英文著述，於1993年刊出。不過這個劃分方式持續地演變。到了1995年，他將默照劃分為四個階段：第一階段是知道身體在打坐；第二階段是打坐時身、心、環境的統一；第三階段是觀空；第四階段是言語難以形容的悟境。

到了1990年代晚期，聖嚴法師開始吸引來自波士頓內觀禪修中心的幾位內觀老師。他們來參加禪七，並邀請聖嚴法師到麻州開示及帶領較短的精進禪修。由於這樣的因緣際會，聖嚴法師劃分默照的階段又改變了。這一次他意圖將默照與內觀區分開來。

他澄清說，雖然默照的源頭是印度佛教「止」與「觀」的修行法門，或譯為「奢摩他」與「毘鉢舍那」，但它確確實實是中國的修行法門。默照的方法是本自於慧能大師所教的定慧不二法門，亦即三昧與般若同時，是止觀衍生的果實：本有寂靜的心是智慧的本質，而智慧是這寂靜之心的自然功用。因此默照是一種同時修習止與觀的方法，而且必須在日常生活中實踐的——不是在蒲團上。這個默照的闡釋可見諸於1998年，在麻州波士頓內觀禪修中心的邀請下，他在那裡闡明了五階段的默照。

這五階段分別是：放鬆身心；觀照全身；觀照環境為自己的身體；觀察內外（自身與外境）無限；實證默照同時，定慧不二，及無我。這幾個階段在他2008年出版的《無法之法》一書中有清楚的敘述；該書係依據1998及1999年兩次默照禪七的開示內容編輯而成的。

隨同他所教的默照法門，他也將話頭的方法標準化了。異於早期他在禪七中用來逼拶學生的，信手拈來的機鋒與靈活自在的公案，聖嚴法師將話頭的修行建立為幾個階段。早在1993年，他對此方法的運用已經蘊含著階段，但是教學法卻尚未完全地確定下來。基本上他教習禪眾必須終其一生抱定一個話頭，並稱之為「參話頭」，即使他們沒有疑情，而只是在「念話頭」。但是如果你能夠真正的參話頭，直到任何事情都無法干擾、打斷你的地步，那麼他就稱之為「看話頭」的階段。在此建構之中，看話頭基本上是在綿密不斷的參話頭的狀態。換句話說，從參話頭到看話頭仍是修習階段，尚未有突破性開悟體驗。在他的2009年編自四次話頭禪七開示的書裡，他澄清修習話頭的四個階段，分別是「念話頭」、「問話頭」、「參話頭」、「看話頭」。這樣的劃分與1993年的版本不一樣，因為現在的看話頭是指在初次開悟之後的階段。聖嚴法師說，「破本參之前叫做『參話頭』，破本參之後叫做『看話頭』」。聖嚴法師將破本參定義成「見佛性或自性。……是……所有煩惱……都中斷了、脫落了。」不過，因為煩惱會再起，而且這只是初步的突破，所以仍須繼續修習。

## 以禪法為教育的最後階段

自從1989年在台灣購得山坡地開始，聖嚴法師投入極多時間建設後來所稱的「法鼓山」。法鼓山的建設對他的健康造成很重的負荷。這個規模浩大的建設計劃，使他越來越忙碌，在禪七當中與禪眾相處的時間也開始減少了。也就是說他對禪眾不再使用即席的機鋒和逼拶的手段。取而代之的是，他投入較多時間，建構話頭及默照兩種教學方法，明確劃分為幾個階段，希望學生能依照他的教導，獨力加

深修行的功夫。結果在一方面他把自己的禪法澄清得更清楚，也更平易近人。在另一方面，隨同他對教育及戒律的興趣，他將禪法轉化成入世型態的人倫教育。

漢傳佛教於民國初期對教育的重視的經過歷程，並不完全是新風潮，因為「教育」在漢傳佛教的內涵中，與西方的教育有不同的意義。佛教的教育，是指中國傳統中的內在修養與倫理教育，根深蒂固地建立在儒家思想上。在中國歷史上，佛教的興衰承續，取決於其在傳統中國價值中的人倫教化方面，能在知識界及社會中產生多大、多活躍的影響。在儒家思想為主流的價值觀中，教育所涵蓋的意義，遠遠超過純粹的學識訓練及技能的傳授。

舉例來說，依照儒教思想家的定義，真正的教育與做為社會一份子的個人品德涵養，是密不可分的。「學」與「教」這兩個字，有濃厚的倫理意涵。它們指的是，學習與內化正確人生規範的完整過程，研習與背誦代表這些規範的典籍，以及在更高層次的「學」上培養足可推廣其應用的菁英份子——不論是擔任地區的領導者或行政官員。教育的理念也涵蓋了對

大眾的品德熏陶，兼重思考與教學訓練。在這個意義上，傳統儒家的「教育」，指的是社會所有階層的教育。聖嚴法師對教育的重視就是在這背景下，才能廣為台灣社會所接受，並建立為改進現代華人社會的切實可行的方法。

佛教在中國歷史上，曾為中國人提供一套另一類的品德教育方案，同時輔助既有的儒家制度，教化社會大眾。可是儒家思想在現代社會的活躍性及影響日衰，使聖嚴法師得以藉由提倡品德修養的廣義教育，也來推廣佛教。他也將自己的教育事業歸因於自己的恩師東初老人。他說：「我們法鼓山之所以有法鼓山，實際上是跟東初老人有關係，他的遺囑交代我，希望我找一塊山坡地來辦佛教教育，這份遺囑現在還在，請查看我的〈師恩難報〉這篇文章。……東初老和尚的遺願，也是我自己的主張：『今日不辦教育，佛教便沒有明天。』」

太虛大師、印順法師、東初老人的著作固然在聖嚴法師身上留下不可磨滅的印記，可是他自己的教育理念，是穩固地建立在他自己對禪的體悟與教學上。我們應



記得，他對太虛大師及其他前輩的批評，就是他們無法將自己的思想具體化與制度化。因為如此，聖嚴法師希望將自己的各種入世的教育事業，建立在一種堅固的制度基礎上。於是他融合了祖師大德以及佛教其他傳承的理念，創立了一個新的禪宗法脈——法鼓宗。

他說：「我則參考了太虛大師及印順長老的偉大思想，站在現代人所見漢傳禪佛教的立足點上，希望把印度佛教的源頭以及南北傳諸宗的佛法作一些溝通。」聖嚴法師說驅使他行動的，也是對漢傳佛教現況的深刻危機感。很多華人不修習漢傳佛教，而修習藏傳或南傳等其他形態的佛教。因為聖嚴法師相信禪是佛陀化世的本懷，為了實現他的理念，還有甚麼比建立一個現代化的禪宗新派更好呢？

當聖嚴法師開始在全球舞台上更為活躍時，他的教法也變為更一般大眾化，迎合無法投身於密集禪修的社會大眾。聖嚴法師將禪重整轉化為一種淨化人心的教育。他發表了稱為三大教育的計劃，後來成為法鼓山組織的推動目標：大學院教育、大普化教育、大關懷教育。

第一種教育是指一般的學校正規教育、傳授知識及專業技能。第二種教育是正式的佛法學習，尤其是禪法的修行。第三種教育是藉由如法會或賑災等積極入世的社會活動，教導佛教的觀念和價值。這三個領域的教育，涵蓋了教化社會中每個人的完整過程。對聖嚴法師來說，這些教育事業是禪佛教的實際應用，知見與實踐同等重要，解行並重，也就是佛法的重心，救世的良藥。

他要使佛教與現代更緊密聯結的目標，固然是受到佛教前輩的影響和自身的體驗，可是融合品德教育與禪法以及最終導致法鼓宗之建立的過程，卻是緩慢的演進。我們可以發現聖嚴法師早在1986年，就將禪詮釋成一種品德教育。他說：「修

行的本身就是一種不斷地矯正的過程，它是一種教育的方式。」

以禪為教育，可視為將禪的修行從禪七的場景移出到外邊的世界。他日益投注於法鼓山的建設，這也促成了這種演變。他無休無止努力地將法鼓山建設為一個學習及實踐佛陀智慧的教育園區。這項工作成為他的重心，取代了禪修的帶領和指導。自1992年起，他要弟子們開始代替他在禪期中帶小參，至少擔任第一輪的小參。隨著他在台灣的影響力增加，他的健康也開始走下坡。他投入越來越多的時間做大型的演講，對著成千上萬的台灣聽眾，宣講運用禪法原則的入世佛教，倡導以佛法淨化人心，達成建設人間淨土的理念。

在1989年購得法鼓山的土地之後，所有層面的教法，包括禪修和他對戒律的興趣，都開始被詮釋為「佛教教育」。所有的佛法活動都含攝在「提昇人的品質，建設人間淨土」的大旗之下。當他的教化演變成一種更積極入世型態的品德教育時，禪的法則是這一切活動的核心主軸。

例如在1993與1994年，他在國父紀念館演講了六次「《維摩經》與日常生活」，以提倡建設人間淨土的理念。當然了，極受禪眾喜愛的《維摩經》，倡導諸佛淨土是由體悟自性清淨的心所創造出來的。聖嚴法師明白表示他「建設人間淨土」的觀念，就是以此經典為依據的。

聖嚴法師也在他的「建設人間淨土」的理念中推展各種運動。其中之一稱為「四安」，包括安心、安身、安家、安業。這四種都是以安心為基礎，而安心又以禪修為重心。這是聖嚴法師推廣禪法，做為社會大眾品德教育的一種方式，含攝在他「大關懷教育」的理念中。

同樣的，在聖嚴法師提倡的環保理念中，他表示籌辦環保活動時，「一定……依照禪修的精神、方法和理念來處

理事。……我們辦的是富有禪修精神的『動中禪』」。這種教育的建構，很顯然不同於如佛光山等其他同時代的佛教團體。舉例來說，佛光山的創辦人星雲法師（1927-）也提倡教育和建立人間淨土，但是他的教育的教學建構，是以一般化的佛教禮節及宗教儀式為導向，無關於任何深刻的禪坐體驗，更不用說是禪法了。

## 結論

聖嚴法師對禪佛教的建構，是對前人教法的重建及對現代社會的回應，而逐漸、自然的演變形成。法鼓宗是穩固地建立在解行並重、教觀雙運的基礎上，尤其是原始佛教的教義、教理，及以惠能為首的禪宗祖師的教法。他在晚期將禪法呈現為一種教育的型態，是由於他覺察到禪法是漢傳佛教最具代表性的宗派，而為了復興漢傳佛教，禪法必須重新包裝，以迎合深受品德教育薰陶的中國大眾。最好的做法就是將自己的教法成立為一個新的禪宗法派，並加以制度化、組織化。這與現代日本佛教宗派在制度上與寺廟密切結合的情況，並無不同。

不過，聖嚴法師也表示了自己建立新宗派的理由。他在《承先啟後的中華禪法鼓宗》小冊中說：

提出「法鼓宗」之目的有二：1. 使禪佛教與義理之學互通。2. 使禪佛教與世界佛教會通，並且接納發揮世界各系佛教之所長。例如本文……所說：「我站在現代人所見漢傳禪佛教的立足點上，希望把印度佛教的源頭以及南北傳諸宗的佛法作一些溝通，因為我所見、所知漢傳禪佛教的特色，就是釋迦牟尼佛化世的本懷。」再如本文……：「立足於漢傳禪佛教的基礎上，……不被言教文字所困囿，活用印、漢、藏三大主流的各派佛學，才是無往而

不利的，也是可以無遠弗屆的。」所以，提出「法鼓宗」之目的，可說是為了期勉法鼓山的僧俗四眾，以復興「漢傳禪佛教」為己任，擔負起承先啟後的使命和責任，以利益普世的人間大眾。

可是在同一小冊裡，他省思現代日本佛教各宗派的長處，以及它們面對新時代挑戰的存續能力。他說：「日本各宗均有固定的寺院，尤其日本的淨土宗勢力非常堅強。日本的淨土宗是教團，創始祖是法然（1133-1212），而後由親鸞（1173-1263）新創的淨土真宗，發展成為勢力龐大的教團，可以說擁有日本佛教一半的信眾。」我們不由得想知道，他在日本所目睹的情況，對他自己開創一個禪的新宗派，究竟影響到甚麼程度。

聖嚴法師的禪法在約莫二十年期間，從原來的靈活應機，演變成完全系統化。這期間見證了他的教法的幾次變遷，從固守傳統的逼拶方法來鍛練學生，轉為尋找新的修行途徑，再回到兩個截然不同的話頭與默照禪法，並將它們改進精煉成為法鼓宗的獨特宗風。

但是聖嚴法師努力創立廣為現代人接受的新型態佛教，其所以成功，是因為他能夠適當運用傳統中國品德教育並注入新活力，以及闡揚了有效的自我淨化方法，尤其是在傳統儒家價值觀，對現代人已經失去了指導人心的活力與適應性的時代裡。

聖嚴法師的教育計劃及入世佛教，在意識形態上，可視之為將中國傳統價值併入佛教領域的行動。在此意義上，他在台灣的成功與在西方的情況，並不相同。在西方一般都將他視為闡揚具有次第，不同於日本禪的人士。聖嚴法師的睿智，在於他在重新建構佛教的歷程中，能夠保留禪的涵融性與適應性，而未失去其直指人心、頓悟法門的特色。

（編者按：本文為節錄版，相關註解請見英文）。

# Master Sheng Yen and the Modern Construction of Chan Buddhism

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Within Chinese Buddhism, the late Master Shengyan Huikong 聖嚴慧空 (1930-2009) (hereafter, Sheng Yen) was revered as a Buddhist educator, a lineage holder of both the Linji and Caodong lines of Chan, and the progenitor of a newly constructed Chan school within Chinese Buddhism called the Dharma Drum Lineage (Fagu zong 法鼓宗), which unites the two lineages that Sheng Yen was heir to. What stands out in this newly constructed Dharma Drum Lineage is a focus on moral education, an important feature of Chinese Buddhism in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries Taiwan. This focus on education is a distinct outcome of the impact from the Buddhist reforms and thinkers of the Republican period (1912-1949). Sheng Yen's teaching of modern Chan is inextricably linked to his Republican period predecessors, but it also evolved from his response to his personal experience teaching his western students and from his response to the Taiwan environment. His Chan is a synthesis and reformulation of the foundational teachings of the Three Studies of precepts, morality, and wisdom found in the early gamas and traditional Chan teachings. The aim of this reformulation is nothing short of ensuring the survival of Chinese Buddhism in the modern age, but the process of this reformulation was complex and gradual. The whole process is a paradigm shift in the development of Chinese Buddhism. While he drew from his predecessors for inspiration, Sheng Yen's formulation is unique and unmatched by his contemporaries. The aim of this essay is to historicize the conditions that have led to his



construction of Chan, the ingredients of his teachings, and the core identity of the Dharma Drum Lineage.

## Sheng Yen's Construction of Chan as Inseparable from Doctrine

It is important to recognize the intellectual and religious position of Sheng Yen vis-à-vis his immediate predecessors in order to understand the significance and aim of the Dharma Drum Chan lineage. While he has inherited the general trajectory of the movement that sought to modernize Buddhism that began in the Republican period, he is more interested in how to implement these ideas and reforms concretely so that Chinese Buddhism can flourish on a global level. His vision and reconstruction of Chan as the apex of Chinese Buddhism was his solution to the perceived crisis. Yet, the complex history of the process of this reconstruction is not easily traceable to specific and deliberate decisions or



planning. It appears that he simply responded to the problems he saw in Buddhism. He drew from his personal Chan experiences, lessons from his intellectual predecessors, and interest in education to formulate a viable form of modern Buddhism.

### Models of Emulation

Several medieval and late imperial Buddhist masters influenced Sheng Yen's thought. He consistently looked to them in order to articulate his own teachings. They were all great Chan masters who not only made significant contributions to Chinese Buddhism but also shaped the course its development. They embodied the two-fold ideal of "equal emphasis in understanding and practice." These figures include Caoxi Huineng 曹溪惠能 (638-713),<sup>1</sup> the sixth lineage master of the Chan tradition and his disciples Hoze Shenhui 荷澤神會 (668-760), the fifth generation successor to Shenhui's Chan, Guifeng Zongmi 圭峯宗密 (780-841), who was also a patriarch of the Huayan tradition. If we are to include Song masters, then the two most often cited by Sheng Yen are Hongzhi Zhengjue 宏智正覺 (1091-1157) and Dahui Zonggao 大慧宗杲 (1089-1163). These last two figures were innovators of Chan methods of practice, and doctrinally very well informed, as demonstrated in their discourse records. Their impact is most prominent in subsequent lineages of Chan in China, Korea, and Japan. Sheng Yen wrote commentaries to all of these masters' works. He also spent much time studying the syncretic thought of Ouyi Zhixu 藕益智旭 (1599-1655) of the late Ming period. Through him he understood the teachings of Tiantai and other schools of Chinese Buddhism.

Sheng Yen sees "innovation" in Chinese Buddhism in the degree to which these masters were able to reinterpret and draw synthesis from both Buddhist and non-Buddhist teachings. He states, "The reason why Chinese Buddhism has become stagnant is because it stopped absorbing external systems of thought and ideas."<sup>2</sup> One of

the reasons why great masters of the past were able to innovatively establish new doctrinal ideas was because they absorbed the best of Confucian and Daoist thinking. In Sheng Yen's commentary to Zongmi's *Origin of Humanity* (Yuanren lun 原人論), a Buddhist primer on doctrinal classification, he states:

*In China, there are very few people who have studied and propagated Zongmi's treatise on Yuanren lun 原人論, a work that expounded the syncretism of the three traditions. In his fivefold doctrinal classification, he included the teachings of humans and gods from Confucianism and Daoism. The impact of this classification is extremely far reaching. We see this impact even in the twentieth-century Venerable Master Taixu's own doctrinal classification of the Five Vehicles and Three-Tiered System (the Shared Teachings of the Five Vehicles, the Shared Teachings of the Three Vehicles, and the Unique Teachings of the Mahāyāna). For example, he lists the Vehicle of Humans and Gods as the first and foundational vehicle [within Buddhism] and that his slogan, "When humanness is perfected, Buddhahood is perfected" emphasizes this point. It can be argued that Taixu was influenced by Zongmi's thought in Yuanren lun. [Such emphasis on humanness in Zongmi's work] can also be said to be the origin of our own endeavor to promote a human-centered form of Buddhism in order to create a Pure Land on Earth.<sup>3</sup>*

Here, Sheng Yen highlights the ingenuity and syncretic thought of Zongmi's doctrinal classification, or panjiao 判教, one of the hallmarks of Chinese Buddhism. This system was a way for Chinese Buddhists to arrange the Buddhist teachings in such a way that each teaching served as an expedient measure to overcome the particular shortcoming of the teaching that preceded it while, at the same time, pointing to the teaching that was to supersede it. In this fashion, a hierarchical progression of teachings could be constructed, starting with the most foundational and leading to the most profound. What is ingenious in Zongmi's system is that he is the first to incorporate Daoist

and Confucian teachings into this Buddhist hermeneutical classification, which can be seen as an attempt not only to harmonize indigenous Chinese teachings with that of Buddhism, but also to appropriate other systems of thought into Buddhism. What is important to highlight is how Sheng Yen values Zongmi's approach to make this text accessible to ordinary people, not ignoring the indigenous Chinese teachings external to Buddhism, but embrace them to construct a new form of Chinese Buddhism. Also interesting is how Sheng Yen sees himself in alignment with Zongmi, both intellectually and genealogically through his immediate predecessors such as Taixu, who was also inspired by Zongmi.

For articulating a practical Chan approach to practicing the Buddhist doctrine, Sheng Yen looked to the work of Chan Master Shenhui, the disciple of Huineng, who is the sixth patriarch of Chan.

He states:

*In the history of Chan Buddhism, Chan master Shenhui plays the role of someone who inherits the wisdom of the past and inspires the future generation of Chan practitioners. After Huineng passed away, even though he had quite a number of disciples, no one can compare with Shenhui. He was fully conversant with both practice and doctrine, and well read in Confucian and Daoist works. Moreover, he was fully immersed in the collections of Buddhist scriptures, commentaries, and monastic codes, and at the same time socially and politically enthusiastic about the welfare of the nation (emphasis mine).<sup>4</sup>*

Sheng Yen not only admires Shenhui's breadth of knowledge in Buddhist doctrine and, at the same time, being a socially engaged Chan master, but also his role as a transmitter of the Buddhist wisdom. Such admiration can only be appreciated in the context of Sheng Yen's approach to actualizing the Buddhist teaching. For example, he has stated that "The main thrust of Buddhism

lies in actualization [of awakening to the truth of reality]. In this sense, doctrinal thought is merely established for the purpose of actualization... Only through genuine realization will one's true wisdom arise. Only then will a person be able to expound the inconceivable Dharma that is pure. This can only come about through using correct teachings as a guide to actualize the true Dharma and illuminate the mind and perceive one's self-nature."<sup>5</sup> He also states that the role of Dharma Drum Lineage of Chan is to "inherit the past and inspire the future."<sup>6</sup>

Sheng Yen admires the profundity of Shenhui's teaching as an entry to understanding the *Platform Scripture* of Huineng.<sup>7</sup> Some scholars contend that the *Platform Scripture* was produced by the hand of Shenhui. This is not the place to discuss the provenance of the text. Irrespective of its author, the text is extremely important in shaping subsequent development in Chan, and in shaping Sheng Yen's own understanding of Chan. In his preface to the commentary to Shenhui's work, Sheng Yen states that "[the depth of this work] allowed me to examine the whole of Buddhism from the perspective of Chan and allowed me to produce a comprehensive Buddhist guide to Chan studies."<sup>8</sup>

Yet, because many earlier scholarly and popular writings on Buddhism were influenced by Zen sectarianism, Shenhui is not usually thought of as a representative of Chan. Most people conceive of Chan as an iconoclastic tradition free from ritual and doctrine, since it focuses exclusively on the enlightenment experience. Conceived of in this manner, Shenhui would not fit the image of Chan. Recent scholarship, however, has revealed that this image of Chan is shaped largely by how Buddhism was transmitted to and studied in the West. The reality is that in China most influential Chan masters were extremely conversant with Buddhist doctrine, despite Chan's claim to be "a special transmission outside of the doctrine learning, which does not establish or depend on words and language." Sheng Yen's singling out of

Shenhui as an exemplar of someone who placed equal weight to learning and practice is not out of the ordinary—it accords with how Chan has been practiced in China for centuries—but his stress on the inseparability of these two aspects is a corrective to what he witnessed in the attitude of American and Japanese Zen.

### The Conditions That Led to the Formation of Sheng Yen's Thought

In order to appreciate Sheng Yen's Chan teachings, it is essential to examine the conditions that fostered and shaped his understanding of Buddhadharma. His dual emphasis on doctrine and practice, understanding and methods, came from his formative years of studying early Buddhism. His integration of early Buddhism with Chinese Buddhism and the altruistic path of the bodhisattva stemmed from his experiences in Japan. His career as a Chan master began in America and kept on evolving until his death. His promotion of Chan came from his wish to promote Chinese Buddhism. Chan Buddhism was merely a gateway front for him to reconstruct a more effective form of Chinese Buddhism for the modern world. While the conditions that facilitated this long process of developing his thought and teachings are complex, we can discern three general phases to this development.<sup>9</sup> These

phases evolved over a span of some sixty years, and his Chan teachings evolved through trial and error.

Early writings from 1961-1969 (age 27 to 39) show Sheng Yen developing an understanding of Buddhism based almost exclusively on the Āgamas and the Buddhist vinaya. I characterize this period as the Early Formation of his intellectual development. During these thirteen years, he published 11 books, two of which are works on comparative religion (comparing Buddhism and Christianity, published in 1956 and 1967). He stated that he wrote these comparative works to counter Christianity's criticism of Buddhism.<sup>10</sup>

Responding to this criticism has prompted Sheng Yen to reflect and examine the foundation of the Buddhist teaching as a whole. The rest of his writings during this time comprise his close reading and study of the early Buddhist teachings as embodied in the Āgamas. This produced two of his most influential works, both published in 1956: *Jielu xue gangyao* 戒律學綱要 (*Essentials of Monastic Precepts and Regulations*) and *Zhengxin de fojiao* 正信的佛教 (*Orthodox Chinese Buddhism*). Arguably these two books represent the foundation of his understanding of Buddhist doctrine. His later interpretation of Chan is rooted in this formative period of his life.

During his doctoral studies in Japan, Sheng Yen's understanding of Buddhism progressed from early Buddhism to later Mahāyāna Chinese Buddhism. I characterize this period as the Integrative Years of his intellectual development, from 1969-1975. Three things transpired: what he witnessed in Japan inspired him to raise the educational level of Chinese Buddhists; his understanding of Chinese Mahāyāna Buddhism was changed by his in-depth study of Ouyi; he was exposed to other forms of Buddhism beyond what he had known. Even though he was keenly aware of Taixu's endeavors to establish Buddhist seminaries, this knowledge was nothing compared to actually witnessing well run seminaries in Japan. At the same time he realized the daunting task Chinese Buddhism faced in trying to integrate



Buddhism with the modern educational system. He was determined to improve the educational level of Chinese Buddhists.

Sheng Yen's study in Japan shaped his doctrinal understanding of Chinese Buddhism and led him to consider how he could formulate Buddhist teachings for the modern age. His 1971 MA thesis on Tiantai zhiguan famen 天台止觀法門 "A Study of the Calming and Contemplation Methods of Tiantai School" was a study of how Huisi's synthesis of doctrine and practice, which gave Sheng Yen a roadmap that—from the perspective of the Tathāgatagarbha system of thought—showed how to move from Buddhist theory to realization.<sup>11</sup> The impact of this thesis can be seen in Sheng Yen's later interpretation of Chan, which is doctrinally associated with Tathāgatagarbha thought. His Ph.D. dissertation on the thought of Ouyi Zhixu, Minmatsu Chuūgoku Bukkyō no kenkyū 明末中國佛教の研究 (A Study of Late Ming Chinese Buddhism), published in 1975, also made a lasting impact on his thought. In particular, Sheng Yen saw Ouyi as responding to the same crisis in the deterioration of Buddhism. Ouyi sought ways to integrate and reinterpret various Buddhist doctrines, particularly the Tiantai teachings, to strengthen Chinese Buddhism vis-à-vis the sociopolitical challenges of the times. He responded vociferously to the challenges of those Buddhists and non-Buddhists who misinterpreted and misappropriated Buddhism. He was a defender of the faith in every sense of the word. His response to misappropriations of Chan teachings was particularly strong.<sup>12</sup> Because he saw various problems with Chan adepts, Ouyi distanced himself from any particular Chan lineage even though he himself practiced Chan in the formative period of his life. Sheng Yen's identity with Ouyi can be seen in the way Sheng Yen responds to what he perceived as a crisis in contemporary Chinese Buddhism and to various misrepresentations of Chan by proponents of Japanese Zen.

Through the works of Huisi and Ouyi,

Sheng Yen understood and appreciated the wealth of materials in the Tiantai tradition. He states:

*Tiantai is an extremely influential school that systematized both India Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna teachings, and evolved its doctrinal position around the Lotus Sūtra and indigenous Chinese thought... Tiantai thought is meticulously systematized, structured, and hierarchical in nature. Whether it is doctrine or methods of practice, it is tightly organized.*<sup>13</sup>

Elsewhere, Sheng Yen stated that Master Ouyi's Jiaoguan gangzong 教觀綱宗 (*The Essence of [Tiantai] Doctrine and Practice*) influenced him greatly, especially in its doctrinal organization of Chinese Buddhism.<sup>14</sup> Sheng Yen's study and commentary of this work allowed him to appreciate the unity of doctrine and practice, or in Tiantai parlance, jiao 教 and guan 觀, and integrate it into his own understanding of Chan.

Sheng Yen witnessed the vibrancy in Japanese academic studies of Buddhism. His historical understanding of Buddhism's—especially Chinese Buddhism's—response to socio-political challenges through doctrinal shifts and social programs can be seen in his other writings during this time. One is the Shijie fojiao tongshi 世界佛教通史 (*A History of Buddhism in the World*), published in 1969. The other is a translation of a 1971 multi-authored book on the history of Chinese Buddhism, Bukkyō shi gaisetsu. Chuūgoku hen 仏教史概説. 中国篇, which Sheng Yen entitled, Zhongguo fojiao shi kaishuo 中國佛教史概説 (*A Brief History of Chinese Buddhism*), published in 1972. These two books, particularly the second one, strengthened his historical awareness of the development of Chinese Buddhism.<sup>15</sup> He states, "Those who study the vinaya are naturally inclined to pay attention to [Buddhist] history. The vinaya and history are inseparable. The vinaya consists of documentation of the livelihood and activities of the sa gha and its continuation. This is precisely history... I am neither a vinaya master nor a

historian. But because of the decline of modern Chinese Buddhism, I engaged in the study of Buddhist history in the hope of finding inspiration to develop Buddhism in the future.”<sup>16</sup>

On the level of practice, Sheng Yen saw how the Japanese reinterpreted and integrated different forms of Buddhism into their society. On the whole, Sheng Yen was both delighted and astonished to witness ways in which various new Buddhist schools “advocated integrating Buddhist teachings into contemporary society...they ran youth groups, women’s groups, and other groups based on age, with special activities geared toward their members,” and he lamented that “traditional Buddhism didn’t do that. The new schools proselytized like Christians, knocking on doors to try to get people to join them.”<sup>17</sup>

During his breaks from graduate studies, he went to a variety of Buddhist institutions to participate and observe their practice retreats. He did retreats with various schools, including Japanese Zen, Shingon, and Nichiren Shōshu. He even participated in and observed various new religions’ (shinko shukyo) activities. In the end he stuck with the Zen teachings of Rōshi Ban Tetsugyu 伴鉄牛 (1910-1996).<sup>18</sup> Ban Tetsugyu was distantly associated with the newly formed Sanbōkyōdan lineage 三宝教団, literally “Three Treasures Religious Organization,” because he was also a student of Harada Daiun Sogaku 原田祖岳 (1871-1961). Harada’s other student Yasutani Haku’un 安谷白雲 founded the Sanbōkyōdan lineage in 1954. Scholars have highlighted the controversial nature of this new lineage;<sup>19</sup> but what is important to note here is the distinct feature of this school’s emphasis on the integration of both Rinzai and Sōtō methods of practice. Sectarian boundaries between different schools of Japanese Buddhism are strong, even among different lineages of Zen. For a lineage to combine the teachings of two distinct lineages of Zen is unheard of in Japan. I have not yet found direct statements by Sheng Yen on the influence of the Sanbōkyōdan on his own teachings, but it is highly plausible that

Sheng Yen’s own combination of the huatou and mozhao methods of Chan stems from what he had learned from Ban Tetsugyu. I will return to this point below.

These experiences in Japan left an indelible mark on Sheng Yen’s understanding of the historical developments of Chinese Buddhism and its doctrinal richness. He was also inspired by the ways in which the Japanese articulated the educational, social, and spiritual roles of Buddhism in modern life. He absorbed everything he could. The impact of these experiences began to blossom in December 1975 when he accepted the invitation of Dr. C.T. Shen, founder of the Buddhist Association of the United States, to serve as the abbot at the Temple of Enlightenment in the Bronx, New York.<sup>20</sup> In the next phase of his life, which I call the Maturing Years of Sheng Yen’s thought, from 1976-2009 (age 47-79), he began a slow process of formulating and articulating a practice-oriented form of Chinese Buddhism catering to modern people.

Unforeseen causes and conditions made Sheng Yen into a “Chan Master.” He originally came to America because many clerics in Taiwanese Buddhist circle viewed him suspiciously. In his twenties, Sheng Yen was a vociferous critic of traditional forms of Chinese Buddhism. Perhaps for this reason, once Sheng Yen left to study in Japan, the monasteries didn’t want him to return. Most clerics were content with the way things were in Taiwan.<sup>21</sup> Soon after receiving his doctorate, Sheng Yen returned to Taiwan for a conference. There, he felt “Like a person who has just gotten a driver’s license, but with no vehicle to drive.”<sup>22</sup> When he returned to Japan after the conference, he received the invitation from C. T. Shen to teach Buddhism in America. On December 10th, Sheng Yen arrived in New York, thus beginning the next chapter of his life.

Prompted by several young Americans, Sheng Yen began to teach Chan. He stated, “Americans are concerned with practical results. The most effective way [to teach them about

Buddhadharma] is to teach dhāras or Chan meditation... I began to teach Americans the theories and methods of Chan practice based on the methods of practice that I have personally used in China and Taiwan. Only the format of my teachings comes from what I observed in Japan. It was just this quickly that I transformed from a recent doctor of literature into a Chan Master transmitting the teaching of Chan. Such a speedy transformation was not something I could have ever imagined.”<sup>23</sup>

## The Evolution of Sheng Yen’s Chan Teachings

Sheng Yen’s career as a Chan master commenced in America in early 1976 when he began to lead intensive Chan retreats. Later, beginning in 1978, he started to also lead retreats in Taiwan. Within ten years, he was leading intensive Chan retreats in Europe and other parts of the world. His teachings, however, kept evolving through trial and error. This process of evolution can be divided into four periods: the Initial Period of Chan Teachings; the Period of Experimentation; the Period of Refining the Two Methods of Chan; and the Final Teaching of Chan as Education. During the last phase, he began to apply his Chan teachings to his broader interests in education and social and philanthropic programs for Taiwan, applying his vision to the practical and social issues of modern life. The principles of Chan guided him through all of his subsequent endeavors in fulfilling his vision of “Establishing a Pure Land on Earth.” What follows is a general outline of this process; it is by no means an exhaustive study. Further research is required to refine these stages of his Chan development.

### Initial Period of Chan Teachings

Sheng Yen’s career as a Chan Master began in the United States. His first American students were a mixture of graduate students, artists,

teachers, and people interested in martial arts. The first meditation class, which he called “Special Chan Class,” was held on May 3, 1976 and the method taught was counting the breath.<sup>24</sup> There were only four students,<sup>25</sup> but within a year, Sheng Yen had a group of close to twenty students and they were already doing seven-day retreats at Bodhi House on Long Island.<sup>26</sup> They were open to anything he taught, and Sheng Yen drew on his experience gleaned from his solitary retreat in the mountains of Taiwan. He derived his format from what he had observed under Ban Tetsugyu in Japan. Examples of this may be seen in his adoption of the signals and formalities involved with the beginning and ending of each period of sitting, how to enter the interview room, slow and fast walking meditation, etc. Yet, Sheng Yen’s impromptu and extemporaneous style during this time was something distinct in his teachings. Ouyi, the subject of Sheng Yen’s dissertation research, was critical of uninformed practitioners who deviated from the core principles of Buddhadharma. Studying Ouyi had influenced the way Sheng Yen taught Chan in that he emphasized the inseparability of precepts, meditation, and wisdom—the basic tenets of Buddhism. Sheng Yen’s Chan was traditional in that it employed the Chan methods of sudden enlightenment, such as the “critical phrase” or huatou 話頭. However, it was also not traditional in the sense that, unlike the idealized type of Chan supposedly taught by pre-Song dynasty lineage masters (zushi chan 祖師禪), where there are no discussions of stages (buluo jieji 不落階級) or methods, he provided a clear path of practice. He incorporated the correct understanding of Buddhadharma into his spontaneous retreat talks.

In one of his first “Special Chan Classes,” he proclaimed to his students, “The type of Chan meditation that I teach now is different from that which is now taught in Japanese Zendo and practiced in Chinese monasteries. I call it ‘Chan’ simply to conform to the current American use of the term, but in fact I am transmitting the

method of cultivation taught by the Buddha. This is the Mahāyāna Dharma Gate which enables you to become enlightened to the wisdom of the Buddha.” What Sheng Yen taught was an integrative, systematic, and practical approach which aimed at the realization of Śūnyatā, or wu 無 (emptiness), as frequently mentioned in Chan discourse.<sup>28</sup> In his early retreat talks, Sheng Yen describes wu as:

*The supreme realization of the original nature of mind. It neither affirms nor negates any conceptual point of view; hence it does not need language for expression. One can exhaust the resource of language and still not express ultimate Chan. This is because Chan transcends knowledge, symbols—the entire apparatus of language. You may call Chan “emptiness,” but it is not emptiness in the nihilistic sense, of “there is nothing there.” You may call it “existence,” but it is not existence in the common sense, of “I see it, so it must be there.” It is existence which transcends the fiction of our sense impressions of the world: of sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and form. Yet this Chan is never apart from, is all of a piece with, our everyday world. It is indwelling in all beings, everywhere, at all times.*<sup>29</sup>

Sheng Yen taught that Chan was neither separate from the world nor identical to ordinary existence. The essence of practice was not to seek some kind of enlightenment but to be free from the bondage of vexations (fan’nao 煩惱). When vexations are absent, the enlightened wisdom mind manifests naturally. In order to realize this wisdom, Sheng Yen set up no fixed teachings or methods. However, he did articulate distinct stages of the process of self-cultivation. He distanced himself from the prevailing emphasis on iconoclastic Zen prevalent in America, centered on kōan practice. He articulated three specific stages that all practitioners must go through in order realize Chan. Ordinary people’s minds, prior to practice, are usually scattered. Their sense of self is limited to and revolves around their bodies

and viewpoints and ideas. After practice, the person enters the first stage where the body and mind are harmonized and stable. This is achieved through self-cultivation. The second stage is the unification of subject and object. That is, the person achieves a unified and expanded sense of self that is one with the whole environment or universe. Some religions recognize this as the highest state of godhead, or union with god. The third stage is the letting go of even this unified self. Only when one has reached a unified mind will it be possible to experience the third stage, the state of wu or no-mind. This is the wisdom of no-self.<sup>30</sup> Sometimes Sheng Yen expands these three stages into four: scattered mind,<sup>31</sup> concentrated mind, unified mind, and no-mind.

The articulation of these three or four stages of Chan practice is unprecedented both in traditional Chan of the lineage masters and in the teachings of his contemporaries. No one had presented Chan in this way in modern times, certainly not Daisetsu Teitaro Suzuki, the most famous proponent of Zen in America at the time; Shunryu Suzuki 鈴木俊隆 (1904-1971), who founded the first Zen monastery in America; Hakuyū Taizan Maezumi 前角博雄 (1931-1995), whose lineage gave rise to many American Zen schools; or Philip Kapleau, arguably the most famous Zen teacher in the United States at the time. Kapleau, a student of Rōshi Yasutani, belonged to the Sanbōkyōdan lineage and taught a form of Zen that incorporated both Sōtō and Rinzai methods. However, in their system, there is no systematization of practice into stages.<sup>32</sup>

In the early retreats, Sheng Yen advocated the “Wu huatou”<sup>33</sup> method as a way to bring practitioners from the unified mind to experience a glimpse of no-mind or no-self. These methods were given on retreats to practitioners who were sufficiently focused. The teaching on huatou was not taught publically, but individually in personal interview. The first retreat was held from May 12 to 19, 1977.<sup>34</sup> Retreatants used all sorts of methods to first calm the mind, after which they

would moved on to the huatou practice. Everyone had a different huatou. Sheng Yen also used “extemporaneous encounters” (jifeng 機鋒) on an impromptu basis, during walking meditation, or suddenly calling a student out and requesting an answer to a meaningless question in order to challenge the student, pushing him or her to generate the “doubt sensation” (yiqing 疑情).

A huatou is a critical phrase from a “public case” or gong’an, which is a record of an incident that usually involves a Chan awakening experience. Or, a huatou may stem from a real life situation. The point in meditating on a huatou or a gong’an is to generate an existential dilemma, a sense of wonderment, a yearning to resolve a question. The greater the sense of wonderment, or “doubt” as it is called in the Chan tradition, the greater the break through into awakening. In a state of unification, when the doubt suddenly shatters, all attachments are let go of and the “self” vanishes. With no attachments whatsoever, one experiences no-self.<sup>35</sup> However, Sheng Yen distinguishes the “live” gong’an or huatou from the dead one. A huatou “comes to life” only when it has become part of the practitioner’s life or arises from real life situations. Moreover, Sheng Yen also articulated different levels of huatou, from shallow to deep, so there are stages to one’s realization according to the use of different huatous. During the early retreats, he typically engaged his students with living situations to urge them on to insight into no-self. Several retreat reports were published in the Chan Magazine and in his book, *Getting the Buddha Mind*. The testimonials detail the lively interactions between Sheng Yen and his students and the insights that the students gained.

One distinctive feature to note is that Sheng Yen did not teach the huatou method in the way the Japanese Zen masters taught the wato (Japanese pronunciation of huatou) and kōan, which is taught in a systematic manner. Due to the influence of Hakuin Ekaku 白隱慧鶴 (1686-1769), the reviver of the Japanese Rinzai

tradition, Zen practice became a curriculum consisting of a specific number of kōans which a Zen student must “pass” through in the curriculum.<sup>36</sup> Yet, a Zen student is typically taught “to be one” with the kōan he or she is working on in order to reach a unified state. Even today, there is little mention of giving rise to the “doubt sensation” from the practice of wato and kōan in the Japanese Rinzai or in the Sanbōkyōdan traditions. Sheng Yen drew inspiration elsewhere on the use of the huatou method. I suspect he must have drawn from his own personal experience in solitary retreat, from his experience with Chan Master Linyuan, and from his readings of Chinese Chan masters’ works and Japanese scholarly studies of them.<sup>37</sup> Yet, it seems that by 1979, he was already formulating his own hierarchy of meditation practices, distinguishing them into three hierarchical stages of “Worldly Chan”; “World Transcending Chan”; and the “Simultaneous Worldly and World Transcending Chan.”<sup>38</sup>

Sheng Yen taught a host of other methods on early retreats. One retreatant says that he would receive a different method on each retreat he attended.<sup>39</sup> On the very first retreat that Sheng Yen ever led, the student in question received the method of “What is wu?” after his mind was sufficiently settled. On the second retreat, Sheng Yen told him to simply “observe” without wandering thoughts, at all times and not focus on anything. This method had no name, but later on the student realized it was mozhao 默照 or silent illumination. On the third retreat, he was asked to contemplate and visualize the white bones (baigu guan 白骨觀), which involves contemplating one’s own body decomposing, rotting, and eventually turning into white bones. This is traditionally one of the methods in the five points of stilling the mind (wu tingxin guan 五停心觀). On the next retreat he was asked to use the method of contemplating sounds, the method associated with Avalokiteśvara or Guanyin (guanyin famen 觀音法門). All the while, during the retreats,



Sheng Yen continued to extemporaneously engage students with “live gong’ans,” compelling them to answer and helping them to have break-through experiences.

In another way that differed from Japanese Zen, Sheng Yen presented Chan practice as inseparable from the three studies (*sanxue* 三學) of precepts, concentration, and wisdom in Buddhadharmā.<sup>40</sup> This framework was established both during and outside the retreat setting. For example, the teaching on repentance during retreats was taught in the context of upholding precepts and moral principles. In his first “Special Chan Class,” he taught not only meditation but also basic Buddhadharmā.<sup>41</sup> In his talks on the *Platform Scripture* on Sunday mornings, he emphasized not just the iconoclastic behavior of Chan masters, but the theoretical underpinning of *saṃsāra*;<sup>42</sup> the importance of wisdom;<sup>43</sup> and the relationship between self-nature and vexations.<sup>44</sup> At the same time, Sheng Yen offered ten-week long beginner’s meditation classes, covering the basics of Buddhist doctrine and meditation. During regular Sunday talks he gave formal commentaries on scriptures, such as the *Platform Scripture*, the *Heart Sūtra*, and the *Sūtra of Complete Enlightenment*.<sup>45</sup>

In retreat Dharma talks, Sheng Yen emphasized the importance of meeting certain requirements, such as great faith (*da xinxin* 大信心) in oneself, the method, and the teacher; great vows (*da yuanxin* 大願心) to help all beings and the attainment of buddhahood; great, ferocious determination (*da jingjinxin* 大精進心) to offer oneself to the practice; and great doubt (*da yiqing* 大疑情) from the process of investigating one’s *huatou*.<sup>46</sup> But these teachings were always carefully implemented within the context of the general Mahāyāna practice of benefitting sentient beings. He taught slow repentance prostration practice as a supporting method on the first retreat, which remains a uniquely consistent method throughout his Chan career. Such a method is not generally taught at other Zen centers and is absent in historical Chan records. This practice

came from his own experience during his six-year solitary retreat in Taiwan.<sup>47</sup> Repentance prostration practice and making vows are historically associated with the liturgical tradition in Chinese Tiantai Buddhism. These ritual practices involve recitation of the liturgy in conjunction with carefully orchestrated prostrations to clear obstructions in intensive *saṃādhi* practices.<sup>48</sup> Sheng Yen himself engaged in repentance rituals in the beginning of his solitary retreat. Master Ouyi also advocated this practice. In similar ways, Sheng Yen taught repentance prostrations on Chan retreats as a way to clear the mind. Practitioners did not recite anything but only focused on a sense of contrition or humility from recognizing one’s stock of karmic obstacles on the path. Sheng Yen often talked about the incongruity of one’s words and actions and how they harm other people to the retreatants as they prostrated. Many would be brought to tears. As a result retreatants would be left with a very settled mind.<sup>49</sup> Later on, Sheng Yen also stratified this method into stages, from the shallower level of repentance to a deeper level of unification or meditative absorption, which fits his fourfold scheme of stages of mental cultivation.

### The Period of Experimentation

The intensive retreats in the 70s were more spontaneous. Beginning in 1980, however, Sheng Yen began to lead four regular retreats each year. He bought a building in Elmhurst, New York, but it was in poor condition. It was only in May, 1981, that the Chan Center was fully renovated. Sheng Yen was able to offer more classes to his students.<sup>50</sup> The more he taught, the more his teachings became clarified and structured. He also explored many other forms of meditation practice, in the hope of systematizing his own teachings.

In 1980 Shengyan’s exploration of methods of practice led him to publish an anthology of teachings from Chan masters, beginning with Bodhidharma 菩提達摩 (ca. 6th century) and ending with the recent master, his own great grand master, Xuyun 虛雲 (1839-1959). In his preface,

he refuted the literal mistaken interpretation of “Chan as not established on language.” He pointed out the necessity to understand Chan as part of the framework of the three studies of precepts, concentration, and wisdom.<sup>51</sup> In 1984 he expanded the definition of “chan” to meditation in general and edited an anthology of masters whose teachings represent the contemplative tradition of Chinese Buddhism. Both non-Chan and Chan masters are included in this volume. This book collects all canonical references of the 111 meditation masters. It shows the shifting values and thought of what these teachers conceived of as practice.<sup>52</sup> In 1987 a selection of Chan masters’ writings from the first book, entitled *Poetry of Enlightenment*, was published in English.<sup>53</sup>

The understanding and purpose behind these works is the same: Sheng Yen wanted to balance what he perceived as the lopsided form of Zen taught by some of his contemporaries, which overemphasized studying old kōans and seeking enlightenment without a foundation in the three aforementioned studies. Instead, he stressed a more variegated side to Chan by selecting these 111 masters; he showed that there are no fixed Chan teachings or approaches to practice. At the same time all practices are not separate from the cultivation of correct understanding, attitudes, and methods that are grounded in Buddhaharma. In the *Poetry of Enlightenment*, he stated, “the prevailing view is that there is no way to describe the experience of Chan, it is suggested that we just go ahead and practice by studying the kung-ans. The purpose of these poems is different in that they specifically show you how to practice, what attitudes to cultivate, and what pitfalls to be aware of. Finally, they describe the *ineffable experience of Chan itself*.”<sup>54</sup>

Indeed, Sheng Yen did not shy away from articulating and presenting conceptual formulations of Chan practice to his students. Correct view is more important than misguided practice. He was a prolific writer. He also encouraged his students to articulate their experiences in words

and publish them in the *Chan Magazine*. Within a year of arrival in America in 1976, he started the *Chan Magazine* the edited transcripts of his teachings and reports by his students, and the Chan Newsletter in 1979, which includes edited transcripts of his teachings and news items and upcoming events, as well as other Chan works which were previously only accessible in Chinese. He continued to write in Chinese on various aspects of Buddhaharma. Sheng Yen showed that Chan was not separate at all from the rich textual and doctrinal heritage of Buddhism. He elaborated formulations of the path, the diverse and intricate methods of cultivation, and the theoretical implications codified in subtle systems of doctrine. For him, “Chan does not have any fixed methods of practice; as long as there is proper guidance by a good teacher, all methods can be included into Chan.”<sup>55</sup> As he taught and wrote, he began to systemize his teachings.

Sheng Yen taught many different methods privately on retreats, but during the late 80s, he broadened the scope of what would typically be considered to be “Chan” methods. He introduced to his students the wealth of teachings from the Buddhist canon. During this time, Sheng Yen began to offer to his students in New York “Wednesday Special Chan Intermediate Classes” on meditation, wherein he introduced various meditation and contemplation (guan 觀) methods described in the scriptures and Chan discourse records. They included the silent illumination method (mozhao 默照),<sup>56</sup> which he has already taught before, contemplating mind (guanxin 觀心),<sup>57</sup> the method of relinquishing (she 捨),<sup>58</sup> and compassionate contemplation (cibei guan 慈悲觀).<sup>59</sup> By 1998, he was teaching a whole host of methods derived from the scriptures, and the methods included in the intermediate class were the bright moon samādhi (mingyue sanmei 明月三昧) and ocean-seal samādhi (haiyin sanmei 海印三昧) to name a few. Not all of these talks were edited and published. His basic teachings on meditating on the breath continued.

The method of “ocean seal samādhi,” for example, was a popular method that many people used and liked. The “ocean seal” is an enlightened realization that all phenomena mutually interpenetrate and do not obstruct one another. It is a state that contains all dharmas.<sup>60</sup> In the Avataṃsaka Sūtra, it states that the Buddha is always in this samādhi. While there are various commentaries or explanations of its meaning, as a meditation method, however, the canonical references are scarce. The only reference of anyone who actually practiced this method in the entire Buddhist canon is a 13th century master named Mengshan Deyi 蒙山德異 (1232-?), and still the method per se is not described.<sup>61</sup> Sheng Yen must have taught this method based on his own understanding based on commentaries on the Avataṃsaka Sūtra. He explained this method as a form of visual contemplation, wherein the self along with external phenomena (for example problems one may encounter) should be perceived as bubbles on the surface of a vast infinite ocean. From the perspective of the ocean, these “bubbles” are only temporary manifestations of Buddha-nature and poses no problems at all. He particularly stressed the applicability of this method in daily life when encountering difficulties.<sup>62</sup>

These and other methods represent an experimental phase in Sheng Yen’s Chan teachings. Sometimes they were given as methods during retreats, while other times they were given as perspectives that one can adopt especially when encountering difficulties. However, by mid-90s, no one was really using these methods anymore. One of the reasons is that Sheng Yen began to encourage his students to focus exclusively on mozhao and huatou methods.

## Period of Refining the Two Methods of Chan

Changes in Sheng Yen’s teachings are the result of many different factors. First, Sheng Yen

responded to the lack of structure in traditional Chan teachings. He began to realize the problems that arose in students who focused too much on the strange behaviors of Chan masters in gong’an. Second, he was requested by his student John Crook to lead “Sōtō-like” retreats in England beginning in 1989. John Crook had been practicing the Tibetan Mahamudra (da shouyin 大手印) and Japanese Shikantaza (zhiguan dazuo 只管打坐) methods prior to practicing Chan with Sheng Yen. Many of John’s students also practiced Shikantaza. Thus beginning with the second retreat in England, Sheng Yen focused on the teachings of mozhao for the retreatants. His close monastic attendant’s experiences with mozhao during this time also contributed to his frequent teaching of the method.<sup>63</sup> As a result, by the mid-90s, the method of mozhao began to be more systematized.

There is a vast difference in the way Sheng Yen taught in the early years and in the late 80s and 90s. In the early years, each student practiced his or her own method. There were no public discussions of methods on retreats.<sup>64</sup> However, by the early 90s everyone began with the breath method, and once the mind was sufficiently settled, retreatants were given either the huatou or the mozhao method. Sometimes they were given one of the methods taught in the “Wednesday Special Chan intermediate Class.” This would typically happen on the fourth day of the retreat. This format lasted until the end of 1997 when Sheng Yen began to lead distinct “mozhao retreats” and “huatou retreats” at the request of his students.<sup>65</sup> The students felt that it would be better if each retreat was devoted solely to one method of practice so they can get deeper into the practice. Otherwise, by the time students began using huatou or mozhao on the fourth day, the retreat would end in a few days.

As stated above, Sheng Yen first introduced the method of mozhao or silent illumination on one of his earliest retreats in the States.<sup>66</sup> Mozhao was taught by Hongzhi Zhengjue 宏智正覺 (1091-1157) in the Song dynasty but

was a method that disappeared into obscurity in the Chinese Chan tradition after several generations. Sheng Yen is known as a reviver of this method. It was one of the methods that he discovered and practiced in his solitary retreat. He once said that he simply sat, without a method, without abiding anywhere, yet let the mind to be clear of everything. Then when he had read Hongzhi's teachings, he realized what he had been practicing.<sup>67</sup> This was the way Sheng Yen first taught mozhao, without stages:

Silent illumination is actually the most direct method, because Chan is not something that you can use your mind to think about. It's not something that you can use any words or form of language to describe. The method is simply to do away with any method of practice. Use no method as the method itself... The silent illumination method is when your mind simply doesn't have any thoughts. At that moment you just put down everything, and that is the state of Chan itself. Silent doesn't mean falling asleep. That's why we have to follow the word "silent" with the word "illumination," that is, your mind is very clear.<sup>68</sup>

Sheng Yen also warned about this method:

*In the beginning stage, people need to practice in a quiet and peaceful place. That's why most of the practitioners of the Caodong sect preferred to practice in the mountains, as far away from other people as possible. This has been the case in China as well as in Japan. For this reason this method of silent illumination may not be suitable for the majority of people, because in our modern society it would be quite difficult for every practitioner to go off into the mountains. So I personally don't often use this method to teach others, at least in the beginning stage. I would only tell a few to use this method. There is another defect of this method. If the practitioner is not using it right, his mind may be in a state of blankness, and he assumes that this is what is meant by "silent." If this is the case, he can never practice well.*<sup>69</sup>

Sheng Yen stated that silent illumination or mozhao is an allusive method and for this reason it "may not be suitable for the majority of people." As seen in one student's recollection (see above), it was a formless, methodless method. The student was asked to be clear of whatever is going on without giving rise to any wandering. Interest in mozhao was generated when *Getting the Buddha Mind* was published in 1980, in which Sheng Yen comments on the *Inscription on Silent Illumination* (Mozhao ming 默照銘) by Hongzhi, the proponent of mozhao in the Song dynasty. On November of 1980, Sheng Yen was interviewed by Lex Hixon on WBAI radio station about mozhao.<sup>70</sup>

It is worth noting, however, that sometime in the late 80s, possibly during his Intermediate Chan Classes, he began to widely teach this method to many people by clarifying its subtle "stages" and concrete "methods" for practitioners to engage with when using this "methodless method." The first published English work on a systematized presentation of the mozhao method into three stages (of observing the body, observing the mind, and the state of enlightenment) is in 1993. However, this formulation kept on evolving from what he had taught before.<sup>71</sup> By 1995, he formulated a fourfold stage. The first stage is observing the body sitting; the second is a unified state of body, environment, and mind sitting; the third is the contemplation of emptiness. The fourth is the ineffable state of enlightenment.<sup>72</sup>

By the late 90s, Sheng Yen started to attract several vipassana teachers from the Insight Meditation Society in Boston. They came on retreats and invited Sheng Yen to give talks and lead shorter retreats in Massachusetts. As a result of these encounters, the stages of Sheng Yen's mozhao method changed again. This time, he sought to differentiate mozhao from vipaśyanā.<sup>73</sup> He clarified that while mozhao originated from the Indian Buddhist practice of "stillness" (zhi 止) and "discernment" (guan 觀) or śamatha and vipaśyanā, it was

thoroughly Chinese. Mozhao is rooted in Huineng's teaching that concentration (ding 定) and wisdom (hui 慧), or samādhi and prajñā, the fruition of śamatha and vipaśyanā, were one and the same: the intrinsically still mind is the essence of wisdom, and wisdom is natural function of the still mind. Mozhao, then, is a method that simultaneously cultivates śamatha and vipaśyanā and must be realized in the activity of daily life—not on the cushion. This is evinced in 1998 when, at the invitation of the Insight Meditation Center of Boston, he articulated a fivefold stage mozhao. The five stages are: relaxing the body and mind; observing the totality of the body; contemplating the environment as one's body; contemplating the vastness of the self and external environment; realizing the simultaneity of stillness and luminosity, samādhi and prajñā and the absence of self.<sup>74</sup> These stages are clearly stated in his 2008 book entitled, *The Method of No-Method*, which is based on two mozhao retreats in 1998 and 1999.

Along with his teachings on mozhao, the huatou method also became standardized. Instead of the spontaneous gong'an he used to present to his students on retreats, Sheng Yen formulated several stages to the practice of this method. By 1993, his formulation of the method began to imply stages of practice, but the teaching was not fully set. Basically, he taught that the practitioners must stay with one huatou, the practice of which he calls "investigating the huatou" (can huatou 參話頭) until the end of his or her life, even though there is no doubt sensation. However, he does indicate that some people merely "recite the huatou" (nian huatou 念話頭). But if one can truly investigate the huatou, until the point where nothing can interrupt practice, then this is the stage of "observing the huatou" (kan huatou 看話頭).<sup>76</sup> In his 2009

book on huatou, which is based upon four huatou retreat talks, Sheng Yen clarifies four stages of practice. The first stage is "reciting the huatou"; the second is "questioning the huatou"; the third is "investigating the huatou"; and last is "observing the huatou." This formulation differs from the 1993 version in that the former still considers observing the huatou as a stage before the initial break through experience of enlightenment. Whereas in the latter, Sheng Yen states that "before penetrating through the fundamental barrier (bencan 本參) [of ignorance] the stage is called investigating the huatou; after the fundamental barrier is broken through, that is the stage of observing the huatou." Sheng Yen defines breaking through the fundamental barrier as seeing the "Buddha-nature or self-nature... a state where all vexations have stopped and dropped away." However, because vexations will return, and that this is the only initial break through, one still need to continue to practice.<sup>77</sup>

## Final Teaching of Chan as Education

After the purchase of the mountain site in Taiwan in 1989, Sheng Yen's involvement increased dramatically in building what later became known as Dharma Drum Mountain. This project taxed his physical health. With this grand building project,



1992年隨侍在聖嚴法師旁參加第二屆中華國際佛學會議。  
Attending the Second Chung-Hwa International Conference On Buddhism.

he became busier and began to spend less time in retreat participants. This meant that he no longer used the extemporaneous, “pressuring” strategy on his students. Instead, he spent more time defining the two methods of *huatou* and *mozhaio* into stages in the hope that his students might follow his instructions and deepen their practice on their own. As a result, his Chan teachings were clarified and more accessible, and these teachings began to take the form of socially engaged moral education. He continued with his other interests in education and the *vinaya* as well.

The Chinese Buddhists’ focus on education during the Republican era really stems from the traditional Chinese sense of self-cultivation or moral education that is deeply rooted in Confucian traditions. Historically the perpetuation and prosperity of Buddhism in China has always depended on the extent to which it was able to demonstrate itself as a viable intellectual and social institution vis-à-vis traditional Chinese values that were held to be essential in moral transformation. In the Confucian system of values, education has always meant much more than purely intellectual training and the development of skills. True Confucian education cannot be separated from the moral improvement of the individual as a social being. The term *xue* 學, “study” or “learning,” and *jiao* 教, “doctrine,” have had strong ethical implications. They refer to a number of areas of development: a total process of acquisition and

interiorization of the norms of the right way of life; the study and memorization of texts that exemplify those norms; and, at the higher level of “study,” the creation of an elite whose members—either as local leaders or as administrators—will be qualified to further the application of these values.<sup>78</sup> Education had a comprehensive ideal of moral training and an ideological-pedagogical aim for the masses. In this sense, traditional Confucian “education” meant education for all levels of the population. Given this context, Sheng Yen’s focus on education was widely received in Taiwanese society and established as a viable means for improving modern Chinese society.

Buddhism in China has historically provided an alternative moral educational program for the Chinese and, at the same time, supported the existing Confucian institution in educating the society.<sup>79</sup> However, with the declining influence of Confucianism as a viable tradition in modern times, Sheng Yen promoted education in the broad sense of moral cultivation which would act as a vehicle for promoting Buddhism. He also attributed his work in education to his master, Dongchu. He states: “The reason we now have a mountain site called Dharma Drum Mountain is primarily because of my teacher, the late Master Dongchu. In his will, he had expressed hope that I would locate a natural hillside to establish an institute for Buddhist education. The details of this will are in my Chinese article ‘The Difficulty



聖嚴法師指導國外禪修者經行。  
Meditation in Movement

in Repaying One's Gratitude to the Master'... I share Master Dongchu's vision that Buddhism has no future without Buddhist education."<sup>80</sup>

The works of Taixu, Yinshun, and Dongchu were undeniably important in the development of Sheng Yen's thinking, but his own vision of what education should be was directly derived from his own life experience and understanding of Buddhadharma and Chan. As mentioned above, his critique of Taixu and others lay in their inability to put their ideas into practice. For this reason, Sheng Yen strove to make his socially engaged educational vision into formal, teachable programs. Thus he established a new school of Chan—the Dharma Drum Lineage—to integrate the observations and methods of his predecessors as well as those of other Buddhist traditions. He stated: "I studied these two thinkers' (i.e., Taixu and Yinshun) systematization from the perspective of someone within the Chan tradition living in the modern world. I hope to show that Indian Buddhism, as the wellspring of all later developments of Buddhism, later developed into the Northern and Southern transmissions."<sup>81</sup> Sheng Yen strongly noted that he was driven by what he saw as a deep crisis (*weiji gan* 危機感) in the affairs of Chinese Buddhism.<sup>82</sup> Many Chinese practiced other forms of Buddhism—from Tibet or South Asia—rather than Chinese Buddhism. Shengyan believed that Chan was the core of the Buddha's message, so it was imperative to establish a new school of Chan to bring this message to world.

Sheng Yen began to take a more active role in spreading the Dharma around the world, and he expanded his teachings to include ordinary people who might not be able practice Chan intensively. Sheng Yen emphasized the moral educational nature of Chan. He articulated a three-fold educational program of 1. extensive university education (*da xueyuan jiaoyu* 大學院教育); 2. extensive universal education (*da puhua jiaoyu* 大普化教育); 3. extensive caring education (*da guanhuai jiaoyu* 大關懷教育).

The first refers to education in the general sense of schooling and acquiring knowledge and professional skills. The second refers to the formal spiritual practice of Buddhadharma, specifically Chan practice. The third refers to teaching Buddhist values through socially engaged activities, such as ritual services and disaster relief work.<sup>83</sup> These three fields of education represent a total process of social transformation of the individual. Shengyan regarded these educational programs as practical applications of Chan Buddhism. They gave equal emphasis to understanding and practice, the heart of Buddhadharma and the cure for the suffering of the world.

While his aim to make Buddhism more relevant for modern time stems from his exposure to his predecessors and his own experience, the process of integrating moral education and Chan, culminating in the establishment of the Dharma Drum Lineage, evolved slowly. Already as early as 1986, we can find evidence of Sheng Yen's interpretation of Chan as a form of moral education. He states: "Chan practice is a continual process of mending [our actions of body, speech, and mind]; it is a form of education."<sup>84</sup> Chan as education can be seen as a way to move Chan from the retreat setting out into the world. Partly this was prompted to his increasing involvement with the building of Dharma Drum Mountain. He tirelessly worked to represent Dharma Drum Mountain as an educational complex for the study and actualization of Buddhist wisdom. This task took center stage at the expense of focusing exclusively on Chan retreats. In 1992 he began asking his students to interview retreatants on his behalf, at least for the first interview.<sup>85</sup> His health began to decline as his influence in Taiwan became strong. He spent more and more time giving large lectures on socially engaged Buddhism using Chan principles, promoting the vision of establishing a Pure Land on Earth by using buddhadharma to purify people's minds, to thousands of people in Taiwan.

After the purchase of Dharma Drum

Mountain in 1989, all aspects of his teachings began to be interpreted as expressions of “Buddhist education,” including Chan practice and his interest in precepts.<sup>86</sup> All of his Dharma activities subsumed under the banner of “Uplifting the character of humanity” and “Establishing a Pure Land on Earth.” While his teachings evolved into a more socially engaged form of Buddhist moral education, the principle of Chan was the core axis around which all of these activities revolved. For example, in 1993 and 1994, he lectured six times at the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall (Guofu jinian guan 國父紀念館) on “Vimalakīrti Sūtra and Daily Life” in order to promote the vision of building a Pure Land on Earth.<sup>87</sup> The Vimalakīrti Sūtra, of course, favored by Chan practitioners in the past, promotes the idea that pure lands of buddhas are created by recognizing the intrinsic purity of one’s own mind.<sup>88</sup> Sheng Yen has stated explicitly that his notion of “establishing a Pure Land” is based on this scripture.<sup>89</sup>

Sheng Yen also promoted many programs in his vision of building a Pure Land on Earth. One of which is what is known as the “Four Fields of Cultivating Peace” (sian 四安), which involves peaceful mind, peaceful body, peaceful family, and peaceful activity. The basis of all of these is a peaceful mind, which centers on Chan practice. This was another way for Sheng Yen to promote Chan as a moral education for the masses and subsumes under his vision for “extensive caring education.” Likewise, in Sheng Yen’s promotion of environmental promotion, he states that the activities of protecting the environment “must accord with the spirit, methods, and principles of Chan... these programs that we’re engaged in is a form of ‘Chan in action.’”<sup>91</sup> This formulation of education is markedly different from other contemporary Buddhist organizations such as Foguang Shan 佛光山. For example, its founder Xingyun’s 星雲 (1927-) also promotes education and building a Pure Land in the human world, but his pedagogical formulation of education is oriented more toward a generalized Buddhist

etiquette and ritual conduct, not tied to any deep meditation experience much less on Chan.<sup>92</sup>

## Conclusion

Sheng Yen’s construction of Chan Buddhism evolved gradually and naturally as a reformulation of his predecessors and a response to modern times. The Dharma Drum Lineage is firmly established in the dual emphasis of doctrine and practice, especially the teaching embodied in early Buddhism and that taught by specific Chan masters, most notably Huineng. His later years of presenting Chan as a form of education stems from his perception that Chan is the most representative school of Chinese Buddhism and that to revive Chinese Buddhism, Chan must be repackaged for an audience steeped in Chinese moral education. The way to do this was to institutionalize his teaching as a new Chan school, not unlike how modern Japanese Buddhist sects are institutionally tied to monasteries.

Sheng Yen states his own reasons, however, for establishing a new school. He states in the booklet, Chengxian qihou:

*There are two purposes of establishing the Dharma Drum lineage. First, to harmonize the doctrine of Buddhism with the practice of Chan; second, 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 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. 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.*"<sup>93</sup>

Yet, in the same booklet, he reflects on one of the strengths of modern Japanese schools and their ability to perpetuate themselves vis-à-vis the challenges of the modern age. He states "The Japanese schools of Jōdo shū (Pure Land School), founded by Hōnen (1133-1212), and the later Jōdo shinsū ("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 have sectarian affiliations with Pure Land Buddhism. In fact every Japanese Buddhist temple and monastery was and is institutionalized and affiliated to a particular sect."<sup>94</sup> One cannot help but wonder the extent to which what he had witnessed in Japan has influenced his own institutionalization of a new Chan school.

Sheng Yen's Chan teachings evolved from being spontaneous to being fully systematized in a period of approximately twenty years. This period witnessed several shifts in his teachings, from adhering to traditional pressuring methods of training students, to finding new approaches of practice, to returning to two distinct Chan methods of huatou and mozhao and refining them as the corporate identity of Dharma Drum Lineage. But the success of Sheng Yen's effort to create a form of Buddhism that is receptive to people in modern times comes from his ability to reinvigorate and appropriate traditional Chinese moral education and articulate effective means

for self-transformation, especially in a time when traditional Confucian values has already lost much of its ideological vigor or import for modern people. Sheng Yen's educational projects and socially engaged Buddhism can be seen ideologically as a move to incorporate traditional Chinese values into the fold of Buddhism. In this sense, the conditions of his success in Taiwan differed from that of the west, where he is perceived mostly as someone who clearly articulated the stages of Chan that is different from Japanese Zen. The ingenuity of Sheng Yen is that, in the midst of this process of reconstructing Buddhism, he is able to retain the inclusive and adaptive nature of Chan without losing Chan identity as a path to sudden enlightenment.

## Footnotes

1. It is worthy to note that when Sheng Yen first came to America, he chose to comment on the teaching of Huineng in the *Platform Sūtra* for his American students as the representative text of Chan; see the *Chan Magazine* vol. 1, no. 3 (October 1977).
2. See interview of Master Sheng Yen, 1999.
3. See Master Sheng Yen, *Huayan xinquan* 華嚴心詮 (Taiwan: Fagu wenhua, 2006), 3-4.
4. See Master Sheng Yen, *Shenhui Chanshi de wujing* 神會禪師的悟境 (Taiwan: Fagu wenhua, 2000), 4-5.
5. See Master Sheng Yen, *Mingmuo fojiao yanjiu* 明末佛教研究 (Taiwan: Dongchu Publishing, 1992), 2.
6. See Master Sheng Yen, *Chengxian qihou* 承先啟後 8.
7. See Master Sheng Yen, *Shenhui Chanshi de wujing* 神會禪師的悟境 5.
8. See Master Sheng Yen, *Shenhui Chanshi de wujing* 神會禪師的悟境 p. 6.
9. Elsewhere I have begun to elaborate on the threefold phase of his teachings; see Yu, "Venerable Sheng Yen's Scholarship on Late Ming Buddhism," forthcoming. I have expanded

- on these three stages here to account for the evolution of his Chan teachings in the later part of his life.
10. See Master Sheng Yen, *Jidujiao zhi yanjiu* 基督教之研究 (Taipei: Dongchu Publishing, 1967; appendix published independently in 1956), 1-2.
  11. See Master Sheng Yen, *Tiantai zhiguan famen* 天台止觀法門 (Taiwan: Dongchu Publishing, 1979), 4, 125-158.
  12. Ouyi Zhixu engaged in extreme self-inflicted violent practices, such as blood writing, to publicly criticize what he perceived as unorthodox Chan practice. Blood writing for him was a way to create boundaries because it demarcated authentic spiritual attainment from the potentially destabilizing disorder of heterodoxy. He called those false Chan teachers as “followers of wild-wisdom” (*kuanhui zhi tu* 狂慧之徒); see for example, Ouyi Zhixu 藕益智旭 (1599-1655), *Lingfeng zong lun* 靈峰宗論 (Taipei: Shihua guoji gufen youxian gongsi, 2004), 791.
  13. See Master Sheng Yen, *Chengxian qihou* 承先啟後 p. 41.
  14. See Master Sheng Yen, *Tiantai xinyao: Jiaoguan gangzong guanzhu* 天台心鑰：教觀綱宗貫註 (Taipei: Fagu wenhua, 2002), 6.
  15. See Master Sheng Yen, *Zhongguo fojiao shi kaishuo* 中國佛教史概說 (Taipei: Shangwu yingshu guan, 1972), iii.
  16. See Master Sheng Yen, *Sheng Yen fashi xuesi lichen* 聖嚴法師學思歷程 88-9.
  17. See Master Sheng Yen, *Footprints in the Snow: The Autobiography of a Chinese Buddhist Monk* 雪中足跡 (New York: Doubleday, 2008), 141.
  18. Ban Tetsugyu 伴鉄牛 was born in Hanamaki city (Iwate prefecture) June 4, 1910. He was ordained as a Sōtō Zen monk by Fuchizawa Chimyo Rōshi July 9, 1917, and received Dharma transmission (*inka*) from him. From 1931 till 1938, he practiced in Hosshinji temple. He became a student at a Sōtō Zen university, Komazawa University, in 1938 and graduated in 1941. After the war he became a tanto or head monk at Hosshinji in 1947, and also a *tanto* at Hoonji (Iwate prefecture) in 1948, and became a master of Toshoji. He also received Dharma transmission from Harada Daiun Sogaku Rōshi 原田祖岳(1871-1961). Ban Tetsugyu established two temples in Japan, Kannonji (Iwate) and Tetsugyuji (Oita). On May 10, 1992 he retired from Toshoji and passed away on January 21, 1996. He was 86 years old. Ban Tetsugyu was known to be an extremely strict Zen teacher. For his teachings in Japanese, see Ban Tetsugyu 伴鉄牛, *Gendai mumonkan* 現代無門関 (A Modern Gateless Gate) (Fukuoka 福岡県: Nakagawa Tetsugen 中川鉄巖, 1980); and *Gendai hekigan roku* 現代碧巖録 (A Modern Blue Clift Record) (Fukuoka 福岡県: Nakagawa Tetsugen 中川鉄巖, 1983). There is also a three volume autobiography; see Ban Tetsugyu 伴鉄牛, *Gutoku tetsugyu: Ban Tetsugyu jiden* 愚禿鉄牛：伴鉄牛自伝 (Ignorant Bull: The Autobiography of Ban Tetsugyu) (Fukuoka 福岡県: Nakagawa Tetsugen 中川鉄巖, 1976-1981).
  19. For a discussion of the controversies of this lineage, see Robert Sharf, “Sanbōkyōdan: Zen and the Way of New Religions,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 22 (3-4). The Sanbōkyōdan official webpage can be found here: [http://homepage2.nifty.com/sanbo\\_zen/top\\_e.html](http://homepage2.nifty.com/sanbo_zen/top_e.html).
  20. For a brief background of C.T. Shen, see Master Sheng Yen, *Footprints in the Snow* 雪中足跡 (New York: Doubleday, 2008), 146.
  21. See Master Sheng Yen, *Footprints in the Snow*, 雪中足跡 p. 148.
  22. See Master Sheng Yen, *Xuesi lichen* 聖嚴法師學思歷程 p. 151.
  23. See Master Sheng Yen, *Xuesi lichen* 聖嚴法師學思歷程 p. 155.
  24. See Master Sheng Yen, *Footprint in the Snow* 雪中足跡 p. 157.
  25. See *Chan Magazine*, vol. 1, no. 1 (Buddhist

- Association of the United States, 1977), 2-3.
26. See *Chan Magazine*, vol. 1, no. 2 (1977), p. 4; Lin Qixian, *Sheng Yen fashi qishi nianpu* 聖嚴法師七十年譜 vol. 2 (Taipei: Fagu wenhua, 2000), 1062.
  27. See *Chan Magazine*, vol. 1, no. 1 (1977), p.1-2
  28. See *Chan de tiyan chan de kaishi* 禪的體驗: 禪的開示 (Taipei, Dongchu Publishing, 1980), 1.
  29. See Master Sheng Yen, *Getting the Buddha Mind* (Dharma Drum Publications, 1982), i-ii.
  30. Sheng Yen had articulated these stages on many different occasions in different times. The following are three examples at three different times, beginning with the earliest: see Master Sheng Yen, “Fojiao de xiuxing fangfa” 佛教的修行方法, in *Fojiao rumen* 佛教入門 (Taipei: Dongchu chuban she, 1977), 188-9; this is a 1977 talk; “Cong xiaowo dao wuwuo” 從小我到無我, in *Chan de tiyan: chan de kaishi*, 192-200; this chapter comes from a 1978 talk; *Getting the Buddha Mind*, 28, which comes from a 1979 talk.
  31. Sheng Yen had taught these stages in the beginning of his career in America, but in terms of published evidence, it was not until 1978 that he formally introduced the stage of “concentrated mind” in the context of teaching the *gong’an* or *huatou* methods; see “First Lecture on Kung-ans,” in *Chan Magazine*, vol. 1, no 7 (1978-9), 20. By 1980, this system is already well in place in his training and he publically discoursed on it; see “The Practice of Chan,” in *Chan Magazine* vol. 2, no. 4 (1981), 31-6. This article is a transcription of a public talk at Columbia University on November 6, 1980.
  32. See Philip Kapleau, *The Three Pillars of Zen: Teaching, Practice, and Enlightenment* (New York, Harper & Row, 1965).
  33. The “Wu” means no, lacking, or non-existence. The “*wu huatou*” refers to the first *gong’an* or public case in the *Gateless Gate* (*Wumen guan* 無門關), a classic collection of 48 *gong’an* cases edited by Wumen Huikai 無門慧開 (1183-1260) during the Song Dynasty. For an English translation, see J.C. Cleary, *Wumen’s Gate in Three Chan Classics*, BDK English Tripiṭaka 74-II (Berkeley, CA: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1999), 65-112. The whole case involves a monk asking Chan Master Zhaozhou Congshen 趙州從諗 (778–897), “Does a dog have buddha-nature or not,” to which Zhaozhou replied “Wu” or “No.” The meaning of this reply and the use of this *huatou* is explained by Sheng Yen in *Getting the Buddha Mind*, 41-46. This particular *huatou* was later widely advocated by Chan Master Dahui Zonggao 大慧宗杲 (1089-1163). In the latter part of his career, Sheng Yen advocated the exclusive use of this particular *huatou* over others. See below.
  34. The first group of retreat participants wrote retreat reports. Seven reports were published in *Chan Magazine*, vol. 1, no. 3 (October 1977), 1-13. The dating of this retreat comes from one of the retreatants, Araknka Galgoczi on p. 12; and reference in an essay, “Shifu’s Speech: Final Night of Retreat. Bodhi House 19 May 1977,” *Chan Magazine* vol. 1 no. 6 (Fall, 1978), 12.
  35. See Master Sheng Yen, “First Lecture on Kung-ans,” in *Chan Magazine* vol. 1, no 7 (1978-9), 16-20, especially 18-20; also in *Chan de tiyan* 禪的體驗 139-44. This talk was delivered on June 25 and July 2, 1978 (see the news items in *Chan Magazine* vol. 1, no. 5 (Summer, 1988), 1). Sheng Yen distinguishes several levels of live *huatou* 話頭 from examples of his students using the method. The earliest written document on Sheng Yen’s teaching on *gong’an* 公案 is June 1977, during his second talk on the Platform Scripture. The talk is appears in *Chan Magazine* vol. 1, no. 4 (December 1977), 15-20. In 1983, the *Chan newsletter* has a section on two distinct ways of working on the *huatou*, the peaceful and forceful ways, see *Chan Newsletter* no. 29 (May, 1993); there is also a whole issue on *huatou* practice, see *Chan*

- newsletter no. 30 (June, 1983).
36. See Victor Hori, *Zen Sand: The Book of Capping Phrases for Koan Practice* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2003).
  37. For his relationship and experience of enlightenment under Linyuan, see *Footprint in the Snow*, 78-88, especially 85.
  38. See Master Sheng Yen, *Xueshu lunkao* 學術論考 (Taipei: Dharma Drum Corp, 2007), 57-61.
  39. The following information comes from my October 2009 interview with Daniel B. Stevenson who was one of Sheng Yen's earliest students.
  40. In 1979 Sheng Yen also founded the "Institute of Three Studies" at Nongchan Monastery, Taiwan; see Qixian Lin, *Sheng Yen fashi qishi nianpu* 聖嚴法師七十年譜 333.
  41. The content of his Special Chan Class is not recorded anywhere, but I was able to confirm with three participants of the very first two classes: Daniel B. Stevenson, Rikki Asher, Paul Kennedy, and Buffe Laffey. My conversations with them about the first Special Chan Class ranged from October 21 to the 28, 2009.
  42. See *Chan Magazine* vol. 1, no. 3 (October, 1977), 18. The talk itself dates to June, 1977.
  43. *Ibid.*, p. 20; vol. 1, no. 4 (December, 1977), 17-8. The talk itself dates to June, 1977.
  44. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, no 5 (Summer, 1978), 16-7. The talk itself dates to July, 1977.
  45. For the *Platform Scripture*, see *Chan Magazine* vol. 1, no. 3 (October 1977), 14-20. This is the first of a series of talks on the *Platform Scripture*, which is dated to June 19, 1977. For the talks on the *Heart Sūtra*, see *Chan Magazine* vol. 2, no. 1 (Summer 1980), 20-6. The first talk actually began in November 1979. He began talking on the *Sūtra of Complete Enlightenment* from 1982-1985; see Sheng Yen, *Complete Enlightenment* (New York: Dharma Drum Publication, 1997, hardcover; Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1998, paperback), 6.
  46. See *Chan Magazine* vol. 2, no. 9 (Autumn, 1982), 30-6; vol. 2, no. 10 (Winter, 1983), 25-30. These talks were later edited into the book, *Getting the Buddha Mind*.
  47. See Master Sheng Yen, *Footprint in the Snow*, p. 121-2.
  48. See Daniel B. Stevenson, "The Four Kinds of Samādhi in Early T'ien-t'ai Buddhism," in *Traditions of Meditation in Chinese Buddhism*, ed. by Peter N. Gregory (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986), 45-97.
  49. These descriptions come from my conversations with early retreatants in October, 2009.
  50. See Lin Qixian, *Sheng Yen fashi qishi nianpu* 聖嚴法師七十年譜 335-37; *Chan Newsletter* no. 13 (1981).
  51. See Master Sheng Yen, *Chanmen xiuzheng zhiyao* 禪門修證指要 1-4.
  52. See Master Sheng Yen, *Chanmen lishu ji* 禪門驪珠集 (Taipei: Dongchu Publishing, 1984).
  53. See Master Sheng Yen, *Poetry of Enlightenment* (New York: Dharma Drum Publications, 1987).
  54. See Master Sheng Yen, *Poetry of Enlightenment*, 3.
  55. See Master Sheng Yen, *Chanmen xiuzheng zhiyao* 禪門修證指要 (Taipei: Dongchu Publishing, 1980), 4. The first time Sheng Yen led retreats exclusively devoted to these methods was in New York Chan Meditation Center.
  56. For silent illumination, see *Getting the Buddha Mind*, 75-88.
  57. The analogy he gave was like a cat watching for mouse to appear. The mind is alert and open, every so wakeful. If a mouse where to appear, referring to a thought, the cat or mind would instantly be aware of it.
  58. This method of "relinquishing" everything was drawn from Hanshan Deqing's discourse records; see *Chan Newsletter* no. 24 (September 1982).
  59. For compassionate contemplation, see *Chan Newsletter* no. 27 (February, 1983). The talk

- was given in May 1982.
60. See, for example, T. no. 1877, 45: 646b24.
  61. See *Changuan cejin* 禪關策進 by master Zhuhong 祿宏 (1535-1615), T. no. 2024, 48: 1099a-1099c26.
  62. See *Chan Magazine* (Winter 1992), 7-8. My dating of the teaching of this method is much earlier than 1992. It was probably 1988 or 1989. This is based on my own memory of when this method was taught, in conversation with Harry Miller, another student who attended the Wednesday Special Chan Intermediate Class.
  63. His attendant monk of this time, Guogu 果谷, was one of the first monastics who practiced this method beginning in the late 80s. Guogu often received instructions privately from Sheng Yen.
  64. This was clarified with Daniel Stevenson, who is one of the earliest retreatants Sheng Yen led in the States. Conversation on 10/22/09.
  65. See Master Sheng Yen, *Liangqian nian xingjiao* 兩千年行腳 (Taipei: Fagu wenhua, 2000), 253. Elsewhere it is stated that specific retreats dedicated to one method, either mozhao or huatou began in 1998, see the preface of *Sheng Yen fashi jiao huatou chan* 聖嚴法師教話頭禪 (Taipei: Dharma Drum Corp, 2009), 3.
  66. See *Chan Newsletter* no. 10 (December 1980).
  67. This statement comes from a personal conversation with Sheng Yen sometime in the mid-90s. The conversation was recorded, Mickey Disend was the interviewer. I was the translator. However, the talk, to my knowledge, was never published.
  68. See *Chan Newsletter* no. 10 (December 1980), 1-2.
  69. *Ibid.*, p. -23.
  70. See footnote 66. *Chan Magazine* vol. 10 (December, 1980).
  71. For a more systematized presentation of *mozhao* in the mid 90s, see Sheng Yen, “Shikantaza and Silent Illumination,” in *Chan newsletter* no. 106, February, 1995; the talk dates to December 1993.
  72. See Master Sheng Yen, *Illuminating Silence* (London: Watkins Publishing, 2002), x, 99-103.
  73. Hereafter I will use the Romanized Sanskrit word, *vipaśyanā*, because Sheng Yen was primarily using the term in the Chinese context, which follows the Indian Buddhist usage as opposed to the modern American phenomenon of “insight meditation” that is based on the Theravāda tradition.
  74. See Master Sheng Yen, *Liangqian nian xingjiao* 兩千年行腳 (Taipei: Dharma Drum Corp., 2000), 90-1; 98-114.
  75. See Master Sheng Yen, *The method of No-Method: The Chan Practice of Silent Illumination* (Boston and London: Shambhala Publications, 2008).
  76. See Master Sheng Yen, *Chan de tian* 禪的體驗 328-30.
  77. See Master Sheng Yen, *Sheng Yen fashi jiao huatou chan* 聖嚴法師教話頭禪 (Taipei: Dharma Drum Corp., 2009), 34-5.
  78. See Erik Zürcher, “Buddhism and Education in T’ang Times,” in *Neo-Confucian Education: The Formative Stage*, ed. by William Theodore de Bary and John W. Chaffee, 19-56 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 19-20.
  79. Zürcher has demonstrated convincingly the social and educational functions of the Buddhist institutional in China beginning in the Tang times; see Zürcher, *op. cit.*
  80. See Master Sheng Yen, *Chengxian qihou*, p. 13; “Shi’en nanbao 師恩難報” was originally published as an article in *Zhongguo fojiao* 中國佛教; it is now included in the anthology entitled, *Diaonian, youhua* 悼念·遊化 in *the Complete Collection of Dharma Drum*, under the (Taipei: Dharma Drum Corp., 2007), 9-36.
  81. See Master Sheng Yen, *Chengxian qihou* 承先啟後 46.
  82. *Ibid.*, Master Sheng Yen, *Chengxian qihou* 承先啟後 23-6.

83. The first time Sheng Yen discoursed on these three fields of education is 1994; later the talk appeared in a small booklet, *Fagu shan chuan fayin* 法鼓傳法音 published in 1994. The booklet is now incorporated in *the Complete Collection of Dharma Drum*, see Master Sheng Yen, *Fagu shan de fangxiang* 法鼓山的方向 (Taipei: Dharma Drum Corp., 2007), 79-80; 130-136.
84. See Master Sheng Yen, *Nianhua weixiao* 拈花微笑 (Taipei: Dongchu Publishing, 1986), 236.
85. Although during this time Sheng Yen did conduct group interviews, sometimes up to five or six retreatants in the same interview room to resolve their questions or difficulties from practice. He began this in New York. Later he also let his Taiwan disciples at Nongchan Monastery conduct interviews. For the dating of allowing his disciples interview, see Lin Qixian, *Sheng Yen fashi qishi nianpu* 聖嚴法師七十年譜 683.
86. In 1991, he held the first transmission of the bodhisattva precepts at Chan Meditation Center in New York. The precepts he transmitted were a modified form based on the five precepts, ten virtues, and the four great vows. These are subsumed under the “three collective precepts” (*sanju jing jie* 三聚淨戒) of a bodhisattva: To practice all virtues; to deliver all sentient beings; and to cultivate all precepts; see *Pusa jie zhiyao* 菩薩戒指要 (Taipei: Dharma Drum Publications, 1995), 4. In 1990 and 1992, he hosted two international scholarly conferences on Buddhist ethics for the modern time. These efforts were ways for him to integrate precepts into his larger reconstruction of Chinese Buddhism for the modern age.
87. Sheng Yen gave a series of six lectures for an audience of 2000 to 3000 Taiwanese people; see Master Sheng Yen, *Weimo jing liujiang* 維摩經六講 (Taipei: Dharma Drum Corp., 1995), 10-11.
88. See chapter one in the *Vimalakirti Sūtra*. For an English translation, see Burton Watson, *The Vimalakirti Sūtra* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 17-31.
89. See Master Sheng Yen, *Weimo jing liujiang* 維摩經六講 9-10.
90. See Master Sheng Yen, *Fagu jiafeng* 法鼓家風 (Taipei: Dharma Drum Corp., 2005), 12.
91. See Master Sheng Yen, *Fagu shan de fangxian*, vol. 2 法鼓山的方向 II (Taipei: Dharma Drum Corp., 2005), 110.
92. See Don Pittman, *Establishing a Pure Land on Earth* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004), 120-1.
93. See Master Sheng Yen, *Chengxian qihou* 承先啟後 54-5.
94. See Master Sheng Yen, *Chengxian qihou* 承先啟後 42-3.