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Session 1 Buddhism in Times of Radical Changes

Keynote Speaker

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Host

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(Director of Dharma Drum Mountain Chan Meditation Center, New York)

Seminar

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2. **Rev. Meian Elbert** (Abbess of Shasta Abbey)

3. **Ven. Guo Huei** (Abbot President of Dharma Drum Mountain)

4. **Ven. Phap Kham**

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Changing times, immovable practice

by Jakusho Kwong Roshi



It's a great honor being present here & realizing this is a special & significant occasion for the Dharma Drum Samgha, as well as, many other Samghas, and even the unseen who could not participate, but are watching TV and listening to the symposium.

I am from a traditional background. I believe that the traditional way - the way of our ancestors, which is the true way. When we talk about calm mind, and a changing world, it seems like everything is changing, but actually it just the same old thing repeating itself again, again and again. Isn't it true? We've become seduced by the repetitive entertainment and preoccupation of the useless stuff which usually demises us, has nothing good to say & makes for a seemingly changing world.

But you know there is something that does not change. So what is it? This is really important. My teacher, Shogaku Shunryu Suzuki - roshi, once said to me that the Chinese Chan masters were the greatest. Here is a story of two Chinese adepts during a work period. Yunyan was sweeping the

ground while Daowu came by waving his hands and called out to him, "Too busy. Too busy!" Yunyan spontaneously said, "There's one who is not busy." Immediately, Daowu said, "Did you know there are two moons?" Yunyan held up his broom, and said, "Which moon is this?" So this demonstration means something which is beyond the words..... This is the expression of the Moment of the Instant before the Present - Yunyan realization!

The word "Calm" is frequently used as a Buddhist approach for calming the mind. You should remember that the Buddha's name means awakening, to awake!

The words Buddhist and practice are worn out words that we should investigate - look into, because Buddhists themselves usually say, "I'm practicing." But what are you practicing? This is the whole point - WHAT!

Practice is very simple and it needs to be done in a refreshingly repetitive way and even a relentless way. The same way delusions/conditions relentlessly practice us. We become their prisoners. But actually

we are not prisoners. In the beginning our sixth ancestor – Hueineng said, “Originally, not one dharma existed.” There was nothing – not even nothing...Delusions have been dissolved & vanished; This is what you realize in your sitting practice.

Practice is intimate with realization. What have we got? Samantha - Calmness and Insight - Realization. When we say we are practicing something, we really should reflect on what we are, actually, saying. The ancient teachers in China said during the great Song or was it the great Tang dynasty? That there was not one person to be found that had to be saved. Or there was not one person in this audience that is not realized. Interesting, Huh?

And so, when we chant The Four Vows in our morning service, the phrase —“Save all sentient beings”— we should remember that these are just words to direct us. The Buddha said there is no one to be saved. So as Buddhists - real Buddhist, we know that there is no one to be saved. Everyone is already saved.....

We think of.....when you are sitting meditation you are going to sit to calm the mind. Of course, that’s how we, usually begin, but later on as you continue to practice, you will realize your mind is already calm. Each and everyone here is the calm mind. We are not sitting in cultivating meditation, to become calm. This is the first mistake. Everyone is already calm. So I think you

will begin to understand these simple but profound statements that have been handed down to us by our ancestors. Their pureness of wisdom & compassion is to remind us who we actually are, not who we are trying to be, but who we actually are. Master Sheng-yen, often mentions to promote the pure-land, but how do you promote the pure-land? If you don’t know, it’s already here. Just like in this ancient Chinese story about the intimate relationship of the horse and donkey. Before the donkey leaves, the horse has arrived. This is the same thing.

It’s already here, and because it’s here, we can perceive it. If it wasn’t here, how can we perceive it? If it wasn’t here, this is what I mean by “here”, how can we see it? So in order to appreciate aesthetics or beauty, it must be here – hand gesture by placing it over his heart - before we see it. In accord, this is the ancient sutra, the Avatamsaka Sutra, Huayen, or Kegon in Japanese. I was always very puzzled by this. In fact, I was called to this attention once again when one of my Dharma brothers suddenly died.

He’s a Korean Zen master, Seon master. His name was Beop Jeong. He was famous in Korea for painting Bodhidharmas in a myriad of forms. He could paint a Bodhidharma about half the size this stage, with a real brush, the old way. Now in the west they use mops. About a decade ago, there was a conference for all the First Ladies of the free

world, which took place in Seoul, Korea. First Lady, Laura Bush watched Beop Jeong as he executed & painted a great Bodhidharma. She was so appreciative with this painting that she purchased it. I don't know if she ever put it up in the White House. But anyway, he had cancer and I was not aware of the severity of it. When I heard he came to America, I thought that maybe he was ok. Later I found out that he was doing research with cancer institutes and acquiring information on how to help people with cancer.

And then within a couple of months, we didn't even know until now, in March, he just died. Basically, he just wanted to share his Joy of the Dharma and his creativity with people.....

That was Boep Jeong's surprised passing. So I wrote a email to a Beopsa in Korea and ask if he knew more about his death. He said he didn't, but he said to me, Beop Jeong's death is from you!

Beop Jeong's comes from you! So that really struck me. I thought he died...When someone dies, it's outside, over there. But "from you", you are the beholder of it. Just like a mirror which beholds its reflection; You hold it. And so this is mind-only, consciousness-only school. What has been said - If you want to understand all the Buddhas of the past, present or future you should know this....

You should know, or see the nature of the whole universe as mind only. There is a well known story,

about Wonhyo, who was one of the most famous Korean Soen/Zen masters in their history. At that time, he made the strong quest and decision to go to China to receive the Dharma. But somehow he didn't quite make it. This is his story.

Wonhyo walked very far and he was dying of thirst. As he came to this place, he was so exhausted that he just collapsed on the ground. It was pitch dark, while he was moving his hand around the ground, he found a cup with liquid inside. He said to himself that he was such a good practitioner, the Buddha has provided me with something to drink; He drank it and had a very wonderful sleep. Because he felt that he had found this wonderful refuge even in this darkness.....

When he awoke, the dawn light was shining, he realized that he was in an open grave site of dead people. The cup that he thought was the cup turned into a skull. There were grotesque things that he drank down. He realized how horrible all this was, and he began vomiting. As he was vomiting, he had a great awakening. It seems strange, but what I mean it was something humorous and serious a double reality just like what can happen in our daily lives.....

But if you were in that situation, there is desperation that your life could end. Who knows how he made the journey. I mean walking, I mean, we take transit. You might meet a tiger, or you might meet some robbers who will steal from you

or even kill you. But, still, he had the conviction to make the journey.

And at times in this changing world, we also have to make our journey and not be stopped by what could possibly happen. Nothing is permanent. All that stuff whether good or bad out there is impermanent. It is created by mind alone.....

I recall in Indra's Net which was very fascinating for me, because in each eye of the net is a jewel, translucent jewel, and each jewel reflects another jewel, reflecting itself to infinity which creates the entire universe. It's beyond ecology, because in this audience and even the people we don't see, who are not here - we are all jewels connecting each other, shining and reflecting each other, creating everything in this universe.

For instance, when you are getting on the bus or an airplane you naturally look at the people as the people look at you. There maybe some people that don't like you. As well as, the other way around. I mean, it happens so quickly, but to be aware of this is the point. We just smile at our moment of stupidity and ignorance. This curtain hangs in space - Infinity's space.

The Third Ancestor, Sengcan said, "The light of the jewel illuminates the jewel itself." We in Zen/Chan speak about the same thing. The jewel is yourself. We are the jewel. We are suspended within Indra's Net. We are the eye of the net. "The light of

the jewel illuminates the jewel of itself. " Isn't this beauty itself?

The light of the jewel illuminates the jewel of itself. This is an expression of emptiness – the realization of truth. The immense sky found in a tiny stone. Listening to the Dharma and having it in mind is one single instance. This is just about the same sutra, the Dharma of dependent origination. It means it's the law of cause and effect – Karma. Everyone is subject to the Dharma/law of cause and effect.

The late Zen master, Yasutani, trained in the Rinzai and Soto School - When he used the word "WHEN," Roshi strikes stick - BAM! This's exactly where the horizontal/relative and vertical/absolute meet. So it's WHEN there is this, there is that. WHEN there is not this, there is not that. WHEN there is no longer this, there is no longer that. I would add - THEN there is this and that. This is found only within the practice of Chan/Zazen. Realization is freedom from karma.

We think that we are imprisoned by delusion and that ignorance lives. Actually, WHAT lives our lives is not delusion. Our realization comes from our delusions. So in the Dharma, this is the work, this is the practice to find out the truth for yourself. In fact, the Buddhadharma states that we must find out if it is true. So this is the forever practice/work to be done from the ancestors' position of the changing world and calming the mind.





Buddhism in Times of Radical Changes

By Humanity

Chang Hwa Fashi: All the Venerables and all the guest speakers, and the participants, it's a pleasure today to have all the masters here. Today we are going to invite them to share their great insight and their practice to help us to go through all the chaotic changes that we are facing today. As religious Buddhist practice organizations, all of them have the same goal to be awakened and to get enlightened. However, the process is very challenging.

So first, we are honored to have our Venerable Phap Kham, who is the Executive Director of the Plum Village Foundation Hong Kong, and also the Dharma Teacher. And next is Venerable Guo Huei, Vice Abbot President of Dharma Drum Mountain, and Dean of Dharma Drum Institute of Liberal Arts. And next is Reverend Meian Elbert, Abbess of Shasta Abbey. And the last is Jakusho Kwong Roshi, Founder of Sonoma Mountain Zen Center.

First I would like to invite all of you to briefly introduce your tradition, your practice, and what is the core value that cannot be changed, and what can be changed?

Rev. Meian Elbert: I am from Shasta Abbey, which is a monastery in Northern California in America. We have male and female monastics training together. We have about 23 of us at the moment. We are celibate, we don't eat meat or drink alcohol, and we keep to the Soto Zen tradition. We are part of a larger order called the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives, which has, as well as our monastery, another monastery in Northern England, and a number of smaller temples in Europe, North America, and Britain. So we are a part of a larger group, and our basic principle is the practice of traditional Dharma. We also practice the upholding of the fourfold Sangha, monastics and lay people, male and female, because we feel, I feel particularly, that you need both lay trainees, male and female, and monastics, male and female, for the benefit of Buddhism.

So a large part of what we do is training monastics, because if we don't train the monks, who's going to do it? We are also teaching lay trainees. We do Dharma Talks. We put some of our talks online for people to hear who want to. We

publish books. Some of them are available for free-download on our website. But a large part of it is simply teaching the Buddhadharma, traditional Buddhist teaching, such as the Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Path, the Three Characteristics: dukkha, anicca, anatt .

Basic Buddhist teaching is, I feel, still applicable in our modern day. Even though things are different, they are not that different. The human heart is still the same. There is still the same problem really in a different dress. It just seems more intense now. But I think that really it's still the same old greed, hate, and delusion we've always had, and we just need to learn how to train with it, convert it, to learn to live together in this world.

It seems harder now, because of the internet. Everybody is connected. Everybody is seeing what everybody else is doing, for better or worse. There are wonderful things about the internet: it means that we can spread the Dharma. And yet it also means people take a little bit of this, now a little bit of that. And this can be diluted by our own views, as Kwong Roshi was saying. It's easy to pick and choose and to take what you want, and miss the root. But the root, the fundamental teachings of the Buddha, are nevertheless still completely applicable in our day and age, and this is what we teach. That's what I teach. And also the practice of kindness, because people can be intimidated by meditation, scripture, scholarship, but anyone can practice



Photo by Tong-Yang Lee

kindness, and Buddhism is kindness. And I think of all the things that we need in this world today, kindness is foremost. So that is what I try to teach: meditation, keeping to the precepts, kindness, compassion, patience with others who don't think the way we do, generosity of thought, and deed, and word, and trying to live the Buddha's path by example as well as by teaching: teaching ourselves, teaching our young monks, teaching our lay people who want to come. We don't charge fees so that people who don't have much money can come to train at our temple, and in our other temples too.

Jakusho Kwong Roshi: Yes, calmness, kindness, generosity - Dana is very important. Jetsuma Tenzin Palmo, who is the first woman practitioner to be recognized as an official teacher in the Tibetan tradition. She just visited us a few months ago. Jetsuma is known as the only westerner to sit in a cave for a long time. If you ask her what her experience was, Tenzin Palmo prefers to speak about the present not the past. She said when visiting China, the Communist government, as well as the people, are realizing that Buddhism is good for their society. This means the Communist Party and the people are familiar with Dharma's simplicity, goodness, integrity and nobility. They recognize the basic goodness & character of the Buddhadharmas, I feel this is a very good sign, because this allows the Dharma to still flourish in China. In turn, these benefits bring out the basic goodness and character

for their people and country.

Jakusho Kwong Roshi: Like I mentioned earlier, the word "Practice" is overused. We really should investigate it. Practice is WHAT? There was an auspicious awakening event in China hundreds of years ago that twenty monks who took a bath all together. As recorded in the Buddhist history, the whole gathering of monks were enlightened simultaneously. Because they practiced and WHAT was the "Practice"? TOUCHING the WATER. That's practice, not using the water, but touching it. And by touching water our bodies & mind become clean and pure. I like this story very much. We should remember when we are practicing, we are not doing something for a purpose. Keeping in mind the Dharma with your action is one single moment. It's the moment of the instant before the present.....

Chang Hwa Fashi: And what is the method that you teach people how to touch the water?

Jakusho Kwong Roshi: I can only demonstrate it.....ultimately, each and everyone must do it for themselves to discover this truth. I am not even sure of "method" or "teaching" is the right word either. We demonstrate it. That's what happens. We demonstrate it.

Roshi remains in SILENCE and transmitting the calmness of what touching is – Water is wet.....

Chang Hwa Fashi: So your organization is Soto?

Jakusho Kwong Roshi: Yes, Soto Zen, yes.

Chang Hwa Fashi: So the method of no method?

Jakusho Kwong Roshi: The method of no method. It is the strict. Method without method means this includes all methods. It is just like when you sit. What do you call Zazen?

Chang Hwa Fashi: Zazen, we call Chan.

Jakusho Kwong Roshi: Chan, yes! Just like when you sit, there is a severe limitation. For instance, A round zafu/cushion placed on a three by three foot zabuton/mat. Through this limitation, you find the freedom. And it's within years of sitting – it is said that possibly twenty or thirty years. It is of essence that your way seeking mind which holds the courage, doubt and aspiration for the ultimate truth must be present. Our ancestors through out space and time have all demonstrated the Dharma and instructed in this way.....

Chang Hwa Fashi: Venerable Phap Kham, please introduce your traditions, and practice, and core values that cannot be changed.

Venerable Phap Kham: Dear venerable monks and nuns, and sangha, I am from Plum Village Hong Kong, a meditation practice center in the tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh and Plum Village. And you see, I am wearing a sunflower with the word "SMILE". When you come to the Plum Village, you get advice to breathe and to smile. To breathe is to be alive, and to smile is to be happy. And so our purpose of practice is to be alive and to be happy. Plum Village traditions practice four original teachings from the Theravada and

also the Mahayana tradition. In our meditations, we concentrate on the Teachings on the Full Awareness of Breathing (Anapanasati Sutta) and The Four Establishments of Mindfulness (Satipatthana Sutta). Those are our core meditation practices. In the Mahayana's teachings, we combine them to see the inter-being nature taught in the Avatamsaka Sutra and in the bigger picture of how these things are interpreted and integrated into our daily lives.

Our teacher, Thich Nhat Hanh, said that one hundred years from now, Plum Village teaching will be changed. It cannot stay permanently. But if the teachings carry the four following characteristics, then you can say they are the teachings of Plum Village. They are nothing new. Our teacher took them from the traditional teachings and made them adaptable and more accessible to the daily life of modern time.

The first one is "**I have arrived. I am home.**"

We have a song:

"I have arrived. I am home.

In the here, and in the now.

I have arrived. I am home.

In the here, and in the now.

I am solid, I am free.

I am solid, I am free.

In the ultimate I dwell.

In the ultimate I dwell."

They are teachings from the Sutra on Knowing

the Better Way to Live Alone.

Dwelling in the present moment, that [is what] the Buddha always stressed.

So, nothing is new. He just put it into modern day language.

The second one is “**Go as a River.**” In the Sangha, we practice selflessness, the emptiness of a separate self. So we encourage the sangha with the practice of living in harmony and awareness. We can have a Sangha in harmony where the Sangha lives in the directions of liberation, of not being caught by duality. And so related to our world that is changing now and how we can adapt to it, I’ll relate it to the story of two monks.

Two novices saw the trees and the wind moving.

And one said, “The tree is moving.”

One said, “The wind is moving.”

And the teacher passed by and said,

“It’s your mind moving.”

So the approach is to be calm, to be still, and not to be caught in the delusions of separateness, in the belief of a separate and non-changing self. And that is the idea of “go as a river.”

The third characteristic is: relative truth and absolute truth inter-are. The present, the past, and the future inter-are. They coexist, without relative truth, there is no absolute truth. This is the teaching of interbeing, of inter-existence, and of inter-are. Without the past, there will be

no present, there will be no future. They inter-are. And this one is a reminder that everything is related. Inter-being is a teaching in the Avatamsaka Sutra, the interdependent relation. How does this apply to our daily life, of relative truth and absolute truth? Peace and happiness is found in pain and suffering. Only when we look at our daily life then we can see pain and suffering consists of an element of peace and happiness.

The fourth element: Our stored consciousness is always ripening. What it means is in our store consciousness - in the what you call “mind-consciousness only”, in our tradition, we call it “manifestation-only teachings,” all our mental seeds of happiness or peace, or pain and suffering are there. And they are waiting for the right moments to manifest. And we should be ready, be aware, and also to be aware of these things so that we can create conditions with mindfulness. We can cultivate the seeds of happiness to manifest more often. And when pain and suffering happen, we can transform them. And so the four tenets of Plum Village, what we are practicing, one hundred years from now, if we carry those four things, then we can say that it is the teaching of Plum Village.

Chang Hwa Fashi: Thank you. We all know that Plum Village is very popular in the Western Society, especially in America. Blue Cliff is next to our Dharma Drum Retreat Center, and we have great communication with the group there. And

so they are all very happy. Breathe and smile is a very simple method but it's hard to keep. But thank you for your sharing. We would listen more later on. And last we will invite Venerable Guo Huei to share our tradition and the core values.

Guo Huei Fashi: As a practice tradition, Dharma Drum Mountain is part of Chinese Chan Buddhism. Our core value is the protection of spiritual environment, which means we cultivate great compassion to benefit others, and practice dissolving our own afflictions through self-reflection to benefit ourselves.

In one of Master Sheng Yen's teaching, "How to Cultivate Competent Staff for Dharma Drum Mountain," he talked about the six levels of cultivation in our organization: getting ordained as a monastic; to be a Chinese Buddhist monastic; to be a Chinese Buddhist monastic in the DDM tradition; to be a DDM monastic in the context of Chinese Chan Buddhism in the modern world; to be a DDM monastic of Chinese Chan Buddhism in the modern world who sacrifices oneself for the Dharma. Master Taixu suggested that "the fulfillment of one's humanity is the fulfillment of Buddhahood." I think this teaching is applicable to everyone.

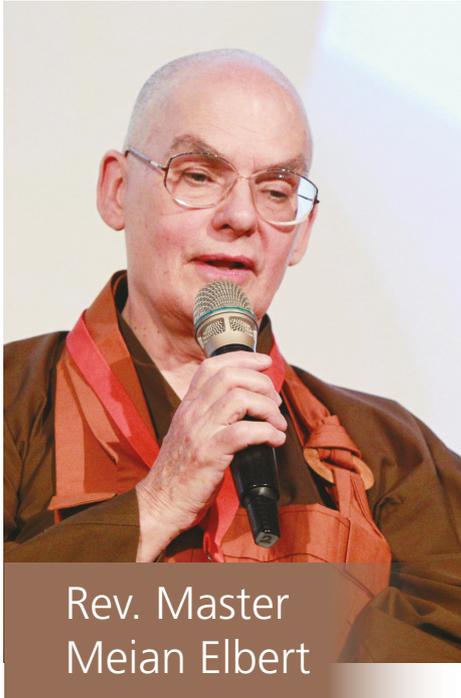
As for how to interact with the world, I think we should first grasp the pulse of the contemporary world. This will enable us to adapt the Dharma to make contributions to the world. At DDM, we try to do this by promoting the threefold education: Extensive Academic Education, Extensive Public Buddhist Education, and Extensive Social Care Education. We also interact widely with communities of other Buddhist traditions around the world and with communities of other religions. By doing this, we provide resources to others on the one hand, and learn from them on the other hand.

The last level – to be a DDM monastic of Chinese Chan Buddhism in the modern world who sacrifices oneself for the Dharma – is the



Jakusho Kwong Roshi

He is the founder of Sonoma Mountain Zen Center. In 1959, he began studying Zen with Shunryu Suzuki Roshi, who recognized him as a Dharma heir to his lineage shortly before his death. He is also one of the nine Western teachers to be officially recognized as Zen Teachers within the Soto Zen School in Japan.



Rev. Master
Meian Elbert

She is The third and current Abbess of Shasta Abbey, also served as Executive Secretary of OBC. She was ordained in 1977 and received Dharma Transmission in 1979 from Rev. Jiyu Kennett. She has served the community as Vice Abbess, Chief Cook, Chief Precentor, Prior and Novice Master.

most important goal. This is none other than the spirit of selfless dedication and the spirit of benefitting oneself by benefiting others, as taught in Buddhism in general.

Chang Hwa Fashi: So right now we get some idea from your tradition and your practice. And next question is, we all know the Artificial Intelligence is very popular right now, so the robot is replacing human power. And also the virtual reality, VR, is changing the way we learn. And biotechnology and technology probably will start to change our physical bodies soon. So for example, we might have robot and human hybrid soon. Those kinds of changes are changing so fast that we modern people start to think about the meaning of human life, and also the ethical issues between the humans, between the environments. So from the Sangha's perspectives, what is your observation on the challenges or opportunities for us to bring peace and benefit to this world? Can you briefly share?

Rev. Meian Elbert: I think that what Buddhists can do is to point to something beyond change, because as we know, this impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, no separate self, is not a true refuge. With regard to Artificial Intelligence, we may be replacing parts of ourselves with machines. When we replace the human heart with a machine, we will be in deep trouble. But until then, no matter what, the human heart is not that different I believe, and I think what Buddhism points to, especially monastics actually, we can point to something that endures beyond all this change. When we have people come for retreats, we have them put down their cell phone as much as we can. It's like a tide that's overwhelming us. We used to say "no cell phone." Now we just try to do our best with it. But sometimes, often actually, people are grateful to actually have a conversation with somebody else who's not on their cell phone. To put down their texting and not to have to be in touch with everybody they know. Just to put it away for a few days or a few weeks.

And they find it refreshing. We yet, as monks, we don't tend to use cell phones all that much. We don't have them all the time. We try not to have everybody with a cell phone. Otherwise we'll all be constantly doing something other than being where we are. So we try to keep it minimal, without ignoring the fact that it's all existing. It's not a bad thing. Having the internet is a good thing in many ways. We learn the Dharma, we talk to each other, we learn what's going on in our world. I think it helps us to feel like one world much more than we ever have. It's a very powerful tool, both for good and for ill as we know.

I don't know much about Artificial Intelligence and replacing people with bionic parts. I don't care that much, to be honest, because I think there is something much more important that we can still turn to. The fundamental, basic teachings of the Buddha that we try to practice. Sitting still in meditation as we all try to do. Keeping to the precepts. These basic, old principles still work for us in this present day, without closing our eyes and saying, "What do I care about all this modern stuff? I'm just going to sit in my retreat hall here." But to keep coming back to the source, to that which motivates us, to that heart that wishes to turn to the good, to turn towards the uncreated, which will always be here, no matter what, when we have come and gone, it will always be here and to turn our heart toward that in faith. People don't like faith

very much nowadays, but I feel it is a vital thing. Everybody actually has to live in faith. And now faith in what is what makes a difference. If it's faith in money, if it's faith in change, if it's faith in technology, it's a temporary thing. But if it's faith in the uncreated, it will stand us in much better stead. So although I don't know much about all the technology and all that, I don't dismiss it. I think it's good, and yet, I don't think it's the most important thing. Thank you.

Jakusho Kwong Roshi: Just a few years ago, Nyoze and myself were requested to give a presentation at the Santa Rosa Junior College. It was about cell phones and the use of media. I opened the talk with: I don't have a cell phone. I don't know much about Artificial Intelligence as much as you do, but I do know a little about human beings. I remember the late Maezumi roshi – who was the founder of the Zen Center of Los Angeles – was asked a similar question. How do you live in such a modern and technological time? He said, "Living a simple life is the best." Your life doesn't have to be exciting. Your life doesn't have to be competitive. It doesn't have to be what you think it has to be. In Zenkaisho. Essence of Zen Precepts, you should know, that here precepts is not something that you should do, or something you should not do. It is said here that these two are both violations of the precepts. For instance, take the Three Pure Precepts, and I think it may have been in the mid-18thc., a monk Bajin Dotan, who had

been hiding in the mountains, during a declined period of Zen practice in Japan. Finally, decided to come out and went to listen to an abbot who gave a Teisho/Dharma Talk in a remote alley. At the end of his Teisho, he gave him a scroll of Kyogo's – Net of Indra. Baijin tried to read it at least 100 times; Here, he received a glimpse of illumination. Actually, it's very difficult to understand. because precept is basically realizing who you are. All this comes from a dedication and strength of a solid sitting practice. The First of the Three Pure Precepts is To Do Good; Second is Don't Do Anything Bad and the Last Pure Precept is To Do Good for Others.

But that's just what most translations state. Here in Zenkaisho - First, "Precept" means to fulfill rituals and forms. Is that said to be good? We are not talking about good and bad. To fulfill means to realize forms, the subjective and objective world, right? To realize it. That's what we actualize; To illuminate it. Over the years, I discover that rituals is in our everyday lives - You do rituals every day. So when you have something like touching the water, you can put that in your everyday life while tying your shoe laces, washing your face, brushing your teeth. Are you in a hurry? Do you feel the brush is touching your teeth? Not very often..... Touching the water, instead of taking a bath. That's the First Precept. The Second Precept is to do Good. And it's the same thing again. To illuminate wholesomeness, as well as, the unwholesome. to illuminate it, to

fulfill it, to be realized by it. The Third One is to Do Good for Others. Again, the same - To illuminate. The third Chinese Ancestor said, "The light of the jewel illuminates the jewel itself." The light of the jewel illuminates the jewel itself. You are the light beyond your belief as you illuminate yourself. As well as, all things. So, I am happy I do have the internet, but I am very ignorant with it's possibilities. I have to ask my son how to use it. My wife and I don't have a cell phone and we are still actively living and alive.

Chang Hwa Fashi: Great. I think Reverend Meian and Roshi Kwong, you live long enough and practice long enough to have this belief and faith in the value of human and also the true values.

The next question goes to Venerable Phap Kham, how do you convince young generations when they face the ever-changing world and no jobs, low pay, and compete opportunities with robots, everything seems not much hope, how do you convince them that the practice is the way and have confidence in our human values? We gather that we are less intelligent than robots?

Venerable Phap Kham: Plum Village is quite connected with young people and we have the movement call the "Wake Up". The movement is for people between 18 and 35 years old to connect with the Dharma. And young people, they come to Plum Village to practice. The main thing is: age is only an idea, a concept. And we also have Sangha for what

we call the “Golden Moment” for people aged 60 and above, because they also need the practice. The main thing is regardless of whether we are old or young we face the same kinds of problem.

Young people, they have energies, but they may be confused and they are looking for directions. And being poor is not a disadvantage. In fact, many people in the well developed world now suffer a lot. The question in the West now is what comes next after I have everything?

We recently heard two stories of a very famous designer and a very famous chef committed suicide. They have everything. They are rich, famous, but they don't have a meaning in their life. “After I have everything, what comes next?” is the question that the chef asked. So the main meaning now here is the influence of material consumerism in our life. Three thousand years ago, people suffered from ignorance, hatred, and anger. Nowadays, people still suffer from that, even more. So we need to bring the practice of Buddhism back into what it does best.

It is to heal, to heal from fear, from anxiety of a changing world. So we have to practice “I have arrived. I am home.” Be in the here, in the now, in the present moment. And when you are in the present moment, just take a few deep breaths, biologically and psychologically, we will be in the stable state, regardless of whatever are coming up. Because the parasympathetic nervous system could be activated, by just taking a few deep breaths. And that was taught by the Buddha 2500 years ago. Take a few deep breaths.

I was an engineer, so I am not impressed by technologies. Technology, it just allows us to get in touch with new things. But, they have not taught us how to get in touch with ourselves. Our teacher was asked when the sheep, Dolly, was first cloned. His student said, “Can you clone yourself? You are old. We can have ten copies of Thich Nhat Hanh.” And he said, “Yeah, you can clone me, but there is only one Thich Nhat Hanh who grew up and matured during the Vietnam War. The other one is



Ven. Phap Kham

He has been a disciple of Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh since 1987. From 1998 to 2004, he practiced at Plum Village's monasteries in France and in the United States, and he was fully ordained in 2000. Since 2005, as one of Plum Village's Dharma teachers in Asia, he has taught the art of mindful living and helped establish communities of practice in Asia and Australia.



He is currently the Abbot of DDM. Becoming a monk at Dharma Drum Mountain ordained under Master Sheng Yen in 1985. In 1997 he went to Japan for further studies. He obtained his doctoral degrees from Rissho University in 2005, and then returned to Taiwan and had served as Dean of the College of Buddhist Studies at Dharma Drum Sangha University.

just a copy, and they are not the real Thich Nhat Hanh.” So the Artificial Intelligence, they are not real intelligence, or in a bigger sense not real wisdom. They can do things faster and this and that.

I do not like the idea of going fast. In fact, when drone taxi became a reality, I will be very, very sad, because we will lose the blue sky. All things around will be covered, surrounded with noise. It is because of people’s tendency, want to move fast. Where do we want to go? What is the good of going from Taiwan to New York in one hour? We still suffer. But because of technologies, so people from New York can listen to this workshop, thanks to technologies. The main thing is that people need to reach out and love someone. Reach out and love someone heals. People may have ten thousand of friends on the internet, but they have no friends in their environment. In a retreat, we have young people come, and teenagers, they come with the gadgets, games, electronics. One of our brothers said, “How could you play with them? They are addicted to these kinds of things.” I told him, “Go there and ask them to put those gadgets down. Go play with them then they’ll play with you.” “You are their connections, not the games.” They all dropped the electronic gadgets, and they had two days with the brothers and sisters without even touching the electronic gadgets. So get out and tell ourselves, the most intelligent thing that a teacher can do is to inspire his students. . Human is the most intelligent computer, and this human is suffering.

The Buddha found a way. Let’s stick to that. We have enough to be happy. One thing about the teachings of why we still suffer even we have so many things. One economist said in the beginning of the 20th Century that by now, we will not have to work longer hours. We should have to work only 15 hours a week, because of the increase in productivity we would have all material things to live a comfortable life. But no, now we work 15 hours a day, because we want to have more. So the main thing

is we have to be better than the neighbors next door. So it comes out to greed, hatred, and illusions. The Buddha has a way to heal it. It is already spelt out: Impermanence, selflessness, dukkha in the Theravada traditions, non duality, and nirvana in the Mahayana tradition. They all are the true realities of life. Stick to them. Don't worry about changes. Change makes life possible.

Chang Hwa Fashi: Venerable Guo Huei, you are becoming our next Abbot President for Dharma Drum Mountain. As the head of the big monastery, all the monastics here, we are facing robotic monastics that can answer and help people. So, how are you going to prepare our sangha, the training and education for our Sangha to face this kind of trend?

Guo Huei Fashi: As I said, the training of DDM staff follows Master Sheng Yen's instructions on the six levels of cultivation, i.e. the six stages of Sangha education. This is the proactive side of the training. More passively, as preventive measures, Master Sheng Yen had established three principles of prohibition for the four-fold sangha. These entail not exploiting resources of our group to engage in activities of profit making and money landing, activities of political interest, and activities of sexual misconducts. Moreover, Master Sheng Yen had also set up rules and principles to prevent the degenerating and corrupting of the DDM Sangha.

In terms of technology, it is neutral in essence. Perhaps some people with bad intentions may apply

it in wrong ways. However, we do talk about five fields of knowledge (Pañcavidyā) in Buddhism: knowledge of inner illumination (adhyātma vidyā), knowledge of medicine (cikitsā vidyā), knowledge of arts and crafts (śilpa-karma-sthāna vidyā), knowledge of language (śabda vidyā), and knowledge of logic (hetu vidyā). With the Dharma as the core principles, we can make good use of modern science, technology and arts to teach and benefit sentient beings, i.e. to practice the Bodhisattva path.

Chang Hwa Fashi: My personal experience is: as director of the Chan Meditation Center in New York, I have to read Chinese News and American News. Every day I have to receive so many information, and I have to... true or false information of course. And then I have to make decisions. I have to interact through the cell phones with many many people from the social media. I found that personally, I have more conflicts: to do or not to do; right or wrong. More confusing, more distractions. Just like Venerable Phap Kham said, actually I am more isolated in other way. And I start to reflect on my practice. I am a practitioner. I have a method, but my daily life is in the opposite direction from my goal of practice. So I would like to invite you to share with all of us on what is the best Buddhist doctrine and method of practice that appear most useful to all of us right now. I know you don't use technology things, but can you give

us some advice?

Rev. Meian Elbert: First of all, actually, you were saying that you don't get much time to practice. I know exactly what it is like: constantly dealing with things. We take time for retreat every year. Every year, each of our senior monks takes a month away on their own to just be quiet, live their life, they don't have to be anybody. Just to do what needs to be done. To do our practice, to meditate, to read, to rest, and just not have to be constantly dealing with stuff. I don't listen to the news when I am away for a month. I think the world can get along without me. If some tragedy happens in the monastery, they will call me and let me know. But I think it's a really good thing to just disengage, for anybody, monastic or lay person, to disengage now and then, and not have to be dragged along by all this stuff.

The teachings that are most important for young people, or for people in the modern age, I think are the teachings that have always been important: the teaching of compassion, stillness, faith, bowing. As long as bowing lasts Buddhism will last. We haven't talked about that. It's ceremonial. If you're living in a temple, you have daily chanting, bowing practice, venerating that which is greater than ourselves. People respond to this. You don't have to be an old person to bow. Young people bow, and we say, "You only learn what it means to bow when you do it with your body." You can talk about it all

you want, but until you bow with your body, you do not understand. Then the heart understands, "Ah! This is what it is." Just as Kwong Roshi has said, to touch the water, to actually do the practice with your body, to be present for your life. We have all been saying this. To just be mindful. The mindfulness movement is great. It helps many many people. But it is not the same as the Dharma. It's a part of the Dharma. We practice mindfulness, but we do it in a different context from just "feeling better about my life." It's a context of reverence for that which is greater than ourselves. Reverence for each other, learning to get along together. Harmony, living together with other beings. The Buddha stressed harmony a lot in his teachings. It's essential: like milk and water blending together. And as we can practice compassion, loving kindness, patience and harmony, these are the things that people respond to. From time immemorial, they respond to these things. They don't have to be a brilliant person to understand. This is really simple. You don't have to be an old person or a young person or a child. Even animals respond to kindness with gratitude. Human beings do the same. And if we can treat each other with kindness, and practice the Dharma, it will go a long way. I don't think we will ever have a unified global Buddhism, because we are all different. Some people practice by meditation, some by chanting, some by ceremonial, some by work, some by study. And I think that's fine, because everybody is

different, and we each find our own way. We don't have to worry about being different, just practice harmony and respect each other. I think the basic teachings of the Buddha have stood us in good stead for two and a half thousand years, and I don't think they will ever go out of date. This is my thought.

Jakusho Kwong Roshi: So what I'd like to say..... I just said something. I don't know if you heard what I said before. I discovered a few years ago that when you bow.....The bow is a universal gesture of happiness and gratitude. ancient human. It's humanity – at its Best - Beyond culture and tradition. When you are happy or in praise - you join your hands together, you clap or even bow. On the one hand, for Buddhists who gassho we place our palms together. We think of the absolute and relative that have been separated and now we make it whole. When you bow most of us bow like this quick and without intention. That's not a Buddhist bow. Buddhist should gassho like this; There is a pause at the seemingly end as your mind naturally stops thinking; Try it. Your mind does not think at this pause. It's only on the exhalation as you bend down. Yeah, you have arrived. Is it true or not?. One cannot bow on the inhalation. You can only bow on the exhalation. And that's what you're cultivating - the mind naturally stops its excessive thinking; It even feels relieved. And when the mind stops, this virtue of this begins to accumulate in your everyday life with the blessings of your teacher. To complete the act of gassho, it is essential that we rise up on the inhalation breath. Within this very breath you are renewed; You are not the same person who you were before....You are vividly alive! This is one of the many application & extension of sitting practice. How many times have you gasshoed/bowed? I remember when I was younger, I would count how many sesshins/intensive retreats I sat. As I became older, I did not need to count. Needless to say, the merit and virtue of this act accumulates.



Ven. Chang Hwa

She is the Director of Chan Meditation Center in New York, USA, since 2008. She also serves as the supervisor of Dharma Drum Mountain Dharmapala Groups in North America, regularly giving public lectures on Buddhism and leading meditation programs and retreats. She holds a Ph.D. in Biochemistry from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (1992-1997).

The relinquishing, letting go of the mind, is not - not so accessible to the self. Whiler in your cars side mirror it is written - objects are closer than you think.....Our misinformed relationship between the polarities/dualities is the cause of suffering. The Compassionate Chinese Zen Master Sekito/ Stone Head 700 – 790 CE offered these four realizations between subject & object. All four are not in a progression as in which is best. First One, the Subject is Gone, but the Object is Here. Second is the Object is Gone; Subject is Here. The Third Realization is, the Subject and Object are both Here. And the Fourth, Subject and Object both gone.

Each realization has its time & space; No one is better than the other. It's like one color in a rainbow holds all colors.....Wonderful, Heah?

But the condition of the unconditioned is that you must practice. You must have a deep spirit of quest – the Way Seeking Mind - and the courage & trust to let go of the illusory small mind. When you let it go, everything becomes present: wisdom, compassion, equanimity, gentleness. Etc...This is the Dharma which you practice and apply it to everything; You emanate it; You illuminate it. You maintain it and share it with others. You become so familiar with this calmness that at will you can turn it on, over and over again. Here is one example of the four: One day my student was having a difficult time with his body and decided to sit in his garden. As he sat, a bird landed on his shoulder; He said to me, “ I didn't know that I was sitting that

still. The bird verified the object because no self was there. Little did he know that he had entered one of Sekito's four realizations.....

Chang Hwa Fashi: Ok, great. Thank you. Because usually when we practice, when we have a retreat, and this is one of the attachments we have is count how many sessions we can sit continuously as a progress of practice. But right now, what I hear is in daily life, even a bow to stop the mind for just a short moment and accumulate this practice. It's very helpful for our busy daily life. Thank you very much! So Venerable Phap Kham.

Venerable Phap Kham: So I think I know what you mean by you receive so many information. I am also one of those people, but I learned how to limit myself. I don't have WhatsApp. I don't have Facebook, and I only receive emails. They say that when you receive an email, you need to answer in three days. Sometimes it takes me a month to answer some particular emails, because I need time to contemplate. The answer will be better.

In Plum Village, when people call in, we take three deep breaths before answering. We don't have staff to answer phone that much, except in the office at designated hours. At times, people hang up before we finish the three breaths. So we learn how to go back to our frustration, to the unsatisfactory of life. And if you need to find something, go to email [Internet]. If you need to talk to somebody, call again. So I protect myself. It's not that we want to close the five senses, or the Five Aggregates.

Nothing is wrong with the Five Aggregates. It is because of our grasping to the Five Aggregates that makes our life miserable. So in Plum Village, we practice Engaged Buddhism. We engage in our every moment of our life. We don't want to say that you have to be in mindfulness 24 hours a day. That's impossible, but we just say that please just be mindful of every breath that you take in and every breath that you breathe out. And if you can do that in every breath, you can do it in one, in every minute, every hour. So just one breath at each time. And if you miss one, take another one. Don't pull your hair and say that I was not mindful at the last minute, the last breath. Then you live in the past.

In Japan, there are many young people committing suicide. And it was said one man, one old man, he saved about a few hundred young men from committing suicide. And the only thing he did was to talk to those young men. We need to have time for ourselves and for other people.

Our teacher said the best gift that we can give to other people is our presence. I am not looking forward to the time in the monastery when everybody will have an iPad to look into the sutras. Ok, you read this and that sutra, click on number. I prefer to have the physical sutra book. My favorite Kindle book is a printed book. I want to get in touch with myself. I want to take time to read. If we practice meditation for 400 years, sitting, looking, the best thing we could do is to discover the Three Dharma Seals, the true reality of life, of

phenomena, which are impermanence, selflessness, and nirvana in my tradition. And the Buddha already found it for us. What else are we looking for? But how we apply them is the main concern. Impermanence is easy to say when deaths happen to other people, but only when our loved ones pass away that we really know what impermanence is. Selflessness, we understand it intellectually, but only when we have to do things for others, and only when our ego is hurt, and then we know what selflessness is. So knowledge and intellectual study can be a deterrent to our enlightenment.

In Plum Village, we only study 20% of the time. 80% of the time is for contemplation and practice. What we want to find is already discovered. It's already in us. That which we have to find gives us a chance to look deeply in ourselves. So how does this apply to our daily life? Every step that we do, every breath that we make, we get in touch in the here and the now, and bring the mind back to the body. Mindfulness is just to be aware, and then the thinking of this or that will follow. But just to be aware. That's enough.

We have come up, in terms of bringing it to society, a program called "Mindfulness Born Peace and Happiness". "Born-" not "based-". It means that mindfulness is the mother of peace and happiness, a way of well being. You heard about MBSR, Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction, MBCT, Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for relapse-prevention of depression. And we have a program

called “Mindfulness Born Peace and Happiness: A Way of Well Being”.

Well, mindfulness is a way of living, and this way of life helps us to cultivate peace and happiness, to transform pain and suffering, and to live a healthy and compassionate life. We talked about the Four Noble Truths and Noble Eightfold Path in a different way. The Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path are about well-being and the way to well-being. So we use modern language to address the old teaching, to bring the old teaching out. And young people are more inspired to think about: “Oh, peace and happiness are there. I cultivate them. Oh, pain and suffering are there. I can transform them. Oh, if I practice these Five Precepts, which is called Five Mindfulness Trainings in my tradition, I can live a healthy and compassionate life.” So it’s all possible.

Guo Huei Fashi: The attitude of practice for a Chinese Chan Buddhist is “to live in the present moment (現在觀),” which means you should maintain clear awareness in all times, at all places, and in whatever you are doing. In other words, your mind should be where your body is (身在哪裡，心在哪裡)。

A very useful method for me is doing prostration. When I make prostrations, I prostrate with no specific object of veneration in mind. I simply stay aware that I am prostrating. If any thoughts appear, I just ignore them, letting them go. Yesterday evening we had a meeting which ended at about 7,

and then we went back to the hotel nearby. I was making three hundred prostrations before going to bed. When I got to three hundred, I felt so relaxed that I decided to continue prostrating, and in the end, making five hundred prostrations. I slept very well afterwards. Making prostrations can help us harmonize our body, breath and mind. It is truly a good method of practice. I remembered reading in Chronological Biography of Master Hsu Yun that the Master had practiced prostrations in a mountain cave. I visualized that the hotel suite was a mountain cave. As long as the mobile phone and the television were turned off, no message could get through and no one could reach me. That would be indeed like a cave.

From the medical perspective, when we walk, the body only moves horizontally. We should get our spine to move in three-dimensional exercises. Making prostration is one such exercise, a very good one. In Tibetan Buddhism, one must complete 100,000 prostrations as the basic practice.

There are many ways for you to practice prostration, such as prostrating to a statue of the Buddha, prostrating as a means of repentance, prostrating in the spirit of gratitude, etc. I would especially recommend formless prostration.(To be continued)

Rev. Meian Elbert: I think it depends on the mind, how we look at something. When we are thinking, there is “me”, separate, and there is a big institution and I am not part of it, we suffer. If we

can consider: I am part of this institution, and I can do my best, it works much better. But we have to have a balance. We can't just give everything we have and leave nothing for ourselves. Just like having time for retreat, we have to leave something over for ourselves. But a lot of it is in the mind.

When we train young monastics, we train them to relinquish "what I want". "I want this." "I want to go to bed now." "I want to eat something different." It goes nowhere. As a monastic, you eat what you are given when it's time, you go to bed at the right time. You follow the schedule. You relinquish clinging to what you want. It's a wonderful practice. And it is also a more formal way of living together with other humans, whether with monastics or lay people. We constantly give of ourselves: a mother to her child, and her whole family, workers to the company, the institution, a person to their country. Constantly, we give of ourselves to others. And the more we can just see ourselves as part of the larger body, the easier it is to have less clinging to "what I want" and more of "how can I help?" As we can do that, the gripping on to what I want, and "me" and "my space", is much softened. And with that, we still have to take time for ourselves, but not to think of it as "my time", "my space", "my training".

"Now is the time to work." "Now is the time to rest." "Now is the time to just bow out for a little bit and just have some time to be still." I think it's the "me" separate from everybody else that

creates this suffering, rather than "me" as part of everything. This separation is the greatest stress, because you see a difference there. And really, the difference is just in our mind.

Chang Hwa Fashi: Ven. Guo Huei, engaging in practicing at a large organization, how should the organization show respect to its member's individual practice? Under layers and layers of rules and regulations, how do we make individual practitioners feel the compassion of the organization? Likewise, when individuals practice in a group setting, how should they relate to the operational direction of the organization and share their responsibilities, like it's reciprocal. Practicing in a group setting, how should the organization itself and its individual members show their compassion?

Guo Huei Fashi: Having practiced as a monk under the guidance of Master Sheng Yen for decades, what inspires me the most is the awakening of Bodhicitta— great compassion. To me, of course, in the beginning, I was focusing on my own liberation from sufferings and on personal accomplishment. Practicing in a group entails going through progressive stages, including the learning of rules and precepts. I had practiced Buddhism in Thailand for a year, thus I know that the Southern tradition is stricter when it comes to precepts.

In Chinese Buddhism, our cultural and social environment does not permit a long-term secluded practice for at least ten to twenty years before we get back to the society. This is a distinctive trait of

the bodhisattva path in Chinese Buddhism. But still, there are stages in our training. For instance, monastics who have just been ordained are not allowed to interact with the outside world too often. They will also not be burdened with too much learning assignment and with regulations which are too strict. Rather, they are provided with an opportunity to make gradual progress in stages. This is what I have mentioned before, the six levels of cultivation. In the end, when they are able to sacrifice themselves for the Dharma, they would have completely let go of individual concerns, and given themselves to the Dharma and all beings without reserve. It is impossible for them to be like that in the very beginning. Therefore, we should make adaptations accordingly to help individuals blend into the practice of the whole group more smoothly.

The Sangha functions to protect individual practitioners and help them accomplish their aspirations, not to hinder them. Correspondingly, individuals should make contribution to the group through their practice. This is in accord with Master Sheng Yen's teaching on the three fundamental levels of practice: starting from the small self, progressing to the great self, and finally attaining oneself. Institutional regulations provide a common standard for everyone to follow.

As one's practice deepens, he or she would be able to make more contribution to the group and the public. In this way, there is a virtuous cycle of interaction between the individuals and the group.

Chang Hwa Fashi: In the past patriarchs and masters, actually the way they trained the disciples was very strict. It's kind of putting you in a square mat. You cannot move. But the goal was to help the disciples get liberated. How you see this and give advice for those monastics we practice in the institutions. Can you help us to view this kind of conditions and in an organization, and Bodhicitta, compassion with the organization, and at the same time, achieve our personal practice?

Venerable Phap Kham: When I was asked that question, I think seriously the limitation of oneself versus the community. So this is a practice about second Dharma Seal of Plum Village: "Go as a river." The practice of emptiness, of a separate self. I was involved with training for about 400 young monks and nuns in Bao Loc, Lam Dong province when we first set up a monastery in Vietnam.

I was also taking care of some elder practitioners in the monastery. So the main thing was that we have to give people the inspiration that they belong to the community. And we operated according to the Six Harmony. Let's give an example of the public transportation. I live in Hong Kong, and I think Hong Kong has one of the best public transportation in the world. Everywhere you go, you can just hop in public transportation, 90%. So, poor people, rich people can go anywhere. So the community policy, they have to serve the majority of the people. .

When 80% of common needs are met, then

there may be 20% are special needs. Then you can tailor the need to the specific people. Take an example of making a shirt. All shirts have common elements. Shirts with brand names are prepared with more details, with special touches here and there. But a shirt is a shirt. And it serves the purpose of presenting ourselves to the outside world. The practice of seeing ourselves as a separate entity is really imprisoning us. So we need to practice non-duality. Things inter-are, but we usually don't see them that way. In our daily life, the senior ones or the newly ordained monks and nuns have the same practice opportunities. Why do people say they have no time to sit, no time to breathe?

Our daily schedule has two hours of sitting, one hour of walking, and one and a half hour for eating three meals in silence. And we say that we have no time to breathe, no time to sit, no time to walk. The main thing is that we don't take those communal practicing time as our own time. The tendency to compartmentalization was pointed out very clearly in the book *The Miracle of Mindfulness*.

We compartmentalize ourselves from others. The main thing is that we have to transform the belief of we are separate from the community. We say that community time is separated from our own time. We say that there are something out there and we need to go to the mountain, to sit for a year, then we can find enlightenment. The Buddha found enlightenment in daily life. So find it in our daily life, where we can see liberation is liberation

from something in our life

In a sutra, the Buddha said somebody taught his student to close all the five sense organs, with the eye seeing nothing, the ear hearing nothing, and then you can develop the development of the five faculties. Then the Buddha commented that in that case, the blind and the deaf would have the ultimate faculty development. That's a wrong way. The right way is to practice equanimity. The "I" hear something that produce unpleasant or pleasant feeling. Whether unpleasant or pleasant feeling, go back to ourselves and apply being aware of the arising, the formation, the duration, and the dissolving of these feelings. And that is equanimity and that's how liberation is obtained in our daily life.

Jakusho Kwong Roshi: I was thinking about institution. One is a part of the whole, and the whole is a part of the one. This is the Avatamsaka Sutra again: The whole is dependent on the one, and the one is dependent on the whole.

And so compassion—how do you teach compassion? I think it's mostly like ummmm... What I am discovering in the West is that, I did it the same, to make the Dharma into American Dharma, to create the Dharma that's American. Suzuki Roshi once said, "You should make Zen - American Zen." And so we went all about it. We didn't even understand what Zen was in the first place. This is the most important thing: to begin to understand what it is before you begin something. So before that, I started to create something that

I thought was American Zen but actually ended up like Zen psychology; It was psychological Zen; It wasn't Zen. Zen is not about creating. Zen is about transmitting. That's what I finally realized. And the same with suffering. In the year of 2014, I got a very serious case of shingles. My karmic luck was that I've been sitting since 1960s consistently. So I didn't suffer, and I was amazed. I mean when I had the shingles, I didn't think that, "I am not suffering." It was only in reflection after I finished with shingles, I thought about my experience that "I didn't suffer."

And what is suffering? It's anger, blame, jealousy, anticipation, fear, selfishness, cruelty, etc..... It's all of these negative dharmas that make us suffer. And then I thought about Buddha's Third Noble Truth: the Cessation of Suffering. It's true! It was because I had in all these years lived in a practicing sangha and accumulated the stability and strength of Zazen. Also, because I was the head, if I didn't do it, then the students wouldn't follow. If I got shingles again, I couldn't guarantee that I would not suffer.....Nothing is permanent, but that was just a glimpse of what the Buddhadharma is. The same with compassion. You, yourself, is a part of the whole, as well as, the whole is all ways a part of you. One can't teach anybody compassion. You have to be compassionate. I think you are all compassionate, but maybe you don't know it.

Chang Hwa Fashi: Can you explain more, Roshi, that we have compassion already? Why we

still suffer when we have a conflict between the institution and the individual, Roshi? Anyway we can help the young people? Let's get back to the lay people. They work in the company, get low payment, they want to make progress, they want to get promoted, but sometimes they cannot. So they feel like: "This is not what I want," so they change jobs. They quit the job, they change jobs all the time, and eventually, nothing gets done. So, any advice for the young people?

You know, and the same thing happens to, I don't know other area, but in New York, we have so many centers right now, so many centers from different traditions. Right now we call "Dharma shopper." Everybody is shopping for the Dharma. They taste it. They try this and didn't work well, and they change and keep changing. Eventually they combine all, and they want to make American Buddhism. So let's switch to the question: do you think that after all this mingling of all the traditions, especially in America, will it eventually become united global Buddhism? And how do you see it? This is open. You can say whatever you want. We all talk.

Rev. Meian Elbert: I am not sure if we want a universal global Buddhism, because, as we were talking about earlier, everybody is different. Everybody has their own way of practice. And if we try to make it all one big thing, it's like one big soup with ingredients that may not quite work, you know. But if we can accept each other, that will be a lot better. With regard to the question about how

somebody in a difficult job works through that: I think that if we expect a happy and easy life, we suffer. If we try to do our part and give of ourselves and not say “what about me?” but say “how can I help other beings?” we suffer a lot less. I think the Dalai Lama said, “If you try to make yourself happy, you will be miserable. If you try to make other beings happy, you will be happy too.” A very simple way to put it, of not demanding something from our life, but accepting what comes, while trying to change things where we need to, not just be a doormat, or say “Well, I guess it’s ok!” but to be willing to give and not just take.

Chang Hwa Fashi: And how you view the development of Buddhism in America, in Western countries?

Rev. Meian Elbert: I am not completely happy about it. I think we are getting a bit diluted, you know, because there seems to be a bit of a trend to make it secular, making it just “something to give me a happy life.” I’ve talked about it, Buddhism with a little “b” versus Buddhism with a big “B”. Our teacher brought Buddhism with a big “B”. We have a big altar, a big hall, big Buddhism, a big view, not a little thing you can put in the closet and bring out on the weekend, it’s something that takes over your whole life. And I think a bit more of that would be very good for us.

Chang Hwa Fashi: Any comments?

Jakusho Kwong Roshi: I really feel compassion for the young people, but you know it’s

life, and you have to...I mean anyone or anywhere, not just the Buddhist community. But it’s life, as well as, death - you are in the process of that very thing. Once, I heard a story that was popular in the Jewish tradition. For example, a young child climbs up on the top of the refrigerator, jumps off and daddy will catch you. Every time daddy catches you. Then one day, daddy does not catch you. This is what I heard. I don’t know if it’s true. Is it? But you know, it’s about impermanence – Buddha’s First Noble Truth. Or life is Suffering, Dukkha. Especially, this one when I heard it, I did not understand its meaning; It just seemed very negative for me. But if we do not begin to understand these Noble Truths our lives will be unhappy and you will suffer. It’s not easy for anyone to grow up. But our lives have crossed the Dharma; This is great karma which can offer us a joyfull and peaceful life.

Within its ignorance, Our society has educated and promised us the world of duality; That everything exists outside of ourselves. And because of this we look away from ourselves to find something out there that will satisfy our insatiable desires. In this entire world of shopping malls, there is a clothing store in America called Forever and this same variations exists in all countries. Young people go there to buy clothes to satisfy their desires. But it’s just the opposite - Like the child, who jumps off the refrigerator and expects his/her father always to be there. That’s the first feeling of “this is not true.”

Life is not going to be exactly what I expected or even wanted it to be. So we have to just...like a flounder, you know, try this and try that. BUT the people Here have come across the Dharma which is very rare. For every one person that's not here, millions of people or more didn't have the precious chance to cross the Dharma. By great fortune and grace our lives intersected with the Dharma.

On Sonoma Mountain, the summer dry grass is quite tall now. And I noticed it, especially, when I walk up to the Abbot's door, the grass is growing, thriving because of the abundance of this year's rain. Every day as I walk up for zazen, I noticed I was making an actual path. There is a path now, because I walk on it every day. As young people, you should try to do the same thing, but you have to know where you are going. What do you want in life? If you want to be rich, then pursue it to see if it works. You have to experience your way, while you can't blame your father nor mother; Dharmas are without blame... Even if Your father, mother have passed. It's just you now. What do you want to do?

There was a Chinese Zen master who asked himself during the day. Even though he was a Zen master, during the day he called his name out and said, "Are you here?" I Just thought, when you are on your iPhone or when you are watching TV. "WHAT are you doing?" Are you wasting time? or just being preoccupied, or at best JUST WATCHING TV. ! I feel for the young, but everyone goes through these processes of

experiences. In Japanese we say Shikata ganai – meaning - It can't be helped; But within humanity this is the Life for all of us . So, Good Luck!

Venerable Phap Kham: We have a young Dharma brother in Plum Village. He said he was in the teenager program, and after that he felt there is something that needs to be corrected in how young people were raised in the West. Some of the young people there were raised in what you call "helicopter parents," which are parents who take care of everything. They do not allow their children to make mistakes, to try out things. They kind of being over-protected and pampered. So one characteristic of these pampered children is that if they have some problems, usually it was caused by other people, not by the children. Even when their children were asked to see the principals, the parents will also blame the teachers. Their children are perfect. But then when the children grow up, and they have to face life, and parents are no longer there. They have to face the supervisor assessing them and give them not good assessment. And they have to do thing on their own. One young man told us "I don't know what to do, and I wish my parents were more demanding of me when I was younger so that I know how to face life." So we live in a society now that is quite comfortable, and we want to create a comfortable zone for our children. We want to make everything deterministic, while life is not deterministic.

Life is full of uncertainty. Parents have a role

to play in that. We want to create a world of determinism, you learn this, you become this, you can have a good life. It's nonsense. It violates the law of interdependent co-arising. It is only a probability. We can only improve the probability that things would happen the way we have planned.

In April 1975, when I was 14 years old in Vietnam, I was about to leave Saigon for the United States about 20 days before the fall of Saigon on April 30, 1975. However, my parents thought that I was young, so I should stay with them and come out later. But we did not make it, and I stayed with my parents under the Communist regime for three years. I interacted with other people and learned a lot even though life was harsh at that time. People cared for each other in that difficult time, even when they had to live in fear, uncertainty and hardship. And those three years shaped my life. It would not have been the way I am today had I not stayed back in Vietnam those three years. Hardships, difficulties shaped us. That's how it is.That's what Viktor Frankl, one of the fathers of humanistic psychology experienced. He was in a concentration camp, and he was separated from all his loved ones. Life condition was harsh, and he had to go through very difficult situations. And the way that he could overcome that was to think about happiness for his loved ones, and throughout that, he had the will, the determination to go on. So, we have to have mud in order to have lotus to manifest. If there is no mud, there is no lotus. At

places where there is no mud but there is lotus, it may be plastic lotus. Plastic lotus does not have fragrance. It's not real lotus. If there is no suffering, there is no liberation from suffering

Chang Hwa Fashi: We're almost running out of time. Let us ask all speakers to share, for everybody and the younger generation practitioners, beginner practitioners, how to face this ever-changing society, how to keep our practice going, and how to regard and treat this world.

Guo Huei Fashi: Benefit yourself by benefitting others. Impermanence is the law of the world. Our lives can come to an end instantly. Hence we should cherish every moment, every second with gratitude, and make good use of it to help more beings who are suffering, the society and the world.

Venerable Phap Kham: So I think I will offer the young people a song, because everything all comes down to mindful breathing. Breathing in, breathing out, we are aware of our emotion. We know that we are solidly. We are calm. You know that song: "Breathing in, Breathing out" If you know that song, we can sing together.

"Breathing in, breathing out.

Breathing in, breathing out.

I am blooming as a flower.

I am fresh as a dew.

I am solid as a mountain.

I am firm as the earth.

I am free.

Breathing in, breathing out.

Breathing in, breathing out.

I am water reflecting

What is real, what is true.

And I feel there is space

Deep inside of me.

I am free, I am free, I am free.”

Mindful breath brings solidity, bring tranquility, bring wisdom. So practice. Get in touch with yourself. Peace will be there.’

Jakusho Kwong Roshi: It’s difficult to say something to the younger generation, but you have to really know what you want to do. I think for myself, I may have gone crazy if I didn’t practice Dharma. My life happened to come across the Dharma like you. Actually I was very quiet person. I didn’t talk to people in the samgha for the first 10 years, but I had the great aspiration to sit. Because I saw this world of suffering. There were Civil Rights issues, Vietnam War, McCartheism, etc., etc..... The world was suffering and didn’t seem to offer any answers. This greatly influenced my practice. Even now the world isn’t in good shape. America as the leader of the free world seems like the worst. As an American citizen, I feel ashamed at our government, and how cruel and uncompassionate our President of America is. So as you see all these needless tragedies around you - This alone could inspire you to do something for your life and the lives of others. It’s not impossible now to not do it. So with the help of many Buddhas and

Bodhisattvas and people with similar thoughts and feelings; We Can Do It! I hope that we were good models for you that will inspire you to bring forth your Basic Goodness. KEEP GOING STRAIGHT even on a windy curve.....OK?

Chang Hwa Fashi: Thank you very much. And lastly, we invite Ven. Meian, especially give us some encouragement for young female monastics?

Rev. Meian Elbert: Young female monastics. I was thinking: for everybody, never to lose faith in the essential goodness of human beings, because all beings are a part of Buddha nature, whether they know it or not. And it can be discouraging to see the world as it is now and to live in the world and think “Where are we going?” But never to give up, as Kwong Roshi said. Never to give up our faith in basic human goodness, because we all have it. Not just Buddhists, not just old people, not just young people, but all human beings. No matter what it looks like, everybody has basic goodness there. So never to despair, but just to do our very best in this world. Encouragement for young female monastics: keep on going, never give up.

Chang Hwa Fashi: Thank you very much! I don’t know you all, but I feel very inspired and energized today. And I hope you all do, and I guess uhm...take home messages to improve your practice and benefit our society and this world more, and bring more peace to others and to ourselves. And thank you all again. Let’s give them a round of applause. Thank you very much. 