

# The Dharma Drum Beat

Newsletter of the Dharma Drum Mountain Buddhist Association—Chicago Chapter

## Upcoming Events in 2012

Happy New Year! Many exciting and rewarding events have been planned for 2012! All events are held at our 1234 N. River Road, Mount Prospect location, unless specified otherwise, and all are free unless noted. We are a bi-lingual organization, welcoming both English and Chinese speakers. Please check the Future Events page on our website for late-breaking news at: <http://www.ddmbachicago.org/futureevents>

### Chinese New Year and Master Sheng Yen Commemoration Weekend

January 28-29, 2012

Join us for a weekend of celebration and gratitude. We celebrate and welcome the New Year with a potluck lunch and express our thanks for the gift of wisdom from our teacher. *"Passing on the Lamp of Wisdom": A Day of Gratitude for the Teachings of Chan Master Sheng Yen.* will be the theme on both Saturday and Sunday and a variety of activities are planned.

#### Saturday, Jan 28

10:30am—12:00pm

Chinese Repentance Chanting of "88 Buddha Names"

12:30pm—1:30pm

New Year's Vegetarian Potluck Lunch

1:30pm—3:30pm

Join us for two fun afternoon events: a Chinese calligraphy demonstration (bring your own brush if you have one) and a vegetarian dumpling demonstration showing filling materials, flavorings, wrapping method and cooking instructions.

#### Sunday, Jan 29

8:30am—12:30am

Half-Day Meditation Retreat with a showing of one of Shifu's videos in Chinese with English subtitles.

12:00 pm—1:00pm

Vegetarian Potluck Lunch

### Beginner's Meditation Class

Saturday, February 4th

9:00am-4:00pm

If you are new or would like to learn more about basic meditation techniques, this class covers correct postures, breathing, and practices of beginner meditation, and discusses the benefits and the stages of meditation from beginner to advanced. The class includes a vegetarian lunch. Please register on the DDMBA website.

### How creative are you?

#### Creativity: The Seed of Success

Sunday, February 12, 2012

1:30pm—3:00pm

Iris Wang, Creative Designer (Textiles) for Brentano Inc., will give a talk about creativity and art. She will first examine the meaning of creativity, the function of creativity, the benefit of being creative in our daily life, and the importance of being creative in a career and in entrepreneurship. She will then expand on how to cultivate creativity with young children through art education.

### Chanting Weekend with Venerable Guo Xing

April 12—16

More information to follow.

### Buddha's Birthday and Spring Fundraising Dinner

May 11—14

Venerables Guo Sheng and Chang Hua to visit.

### Gilbert Gutierrez: The Nature of Mind

June 22—24

Dharma Heir Gilbert visits for lectures.

### Sutra Talk with Venerable Guo Guang

August 2—13

The Sutra of Hui-neng in Mandarin on Saturday and Sunday lecture in English.

### Visit with Venerable Guo Xing

October 19—22

Lectures and Fall Fundraising Dinner

### DDMBA Chicago Chapter Staff Meeting

On **Sunday, January 8th, 2012 from 1—3 pm** a staff meeting will be held at the Mount Prospect location for Chicago Chapter staff members. All those who are interested in contributing or learning more about the workings of DDMBA are also welcome to attend.



## Living the Dharma: Why Dietary Restrictions?

In a long-distance interview with Venerable Chang-Hwa (NY), she shared information about some DDMBA practices regarding meals. Why vegetarian, no garlic or onions? Why not eggs? Here are her answers.

### Is it a requirement that all food brought and served at potlucks and DDMBA dinners are vegetarian? Why?

For any potlucks or DDMBA dinners held as organizational events, vegetarian meals are required. This is true regardless of what the purpose is (for example, for a monthly gathering, fundraising dinner, etc.) and whether or not they are held at a DDMBA center. This is specified because DDMBA is a Chinese Buddhist organization, and it is our tradition to have vegetarian foods for our organizational public events. Vegetarian meals are also required because our center is a place of practice and worship, and it is a way to show respect. Also, the scent of meat would disturb the atmosphere. If potlucks are private events between our members, for example, family gathering for Christmas, or parties for family member's birthday, etc, this requirement does not apply.

### Why are eggs, garlic and onions not allowed? Are these restrictions as strict as for meat?

Eggs are not allowed, because in olden times, eggs were all fertilized and were treated as living beings. Nowadays, most eggs are not fertilized, and eating eggs does not break the vows. But its scent is "腥," meaning it smells like an animal corpse. Therefore, most vegetarians try not to eat eggs either.

According to Surangama Sutra, if people eat raw garlic and onions, they easily get angry; and if they eat them cooked, they easily generate sexual desire. Their strong smell lasts for a long time, which will disturb the public. Also they are not good for practitioners. So, Chinese Buddhist vegetarian meals usually do not allow onions and garlic.

### Are there any other food recommendations that DDMBA or Chan Buddhism makes?

Healthy foods, low salt, and low oil are preferred. For retreat events, light meals are recommended for practitioners.

### DDMBA does require monks and nuns to be vegetarian, but not lay persons, including bodhisattvas. Why?

For Chinese Buddhist monastics, we have to be vegetarian, because it is one of our vows. But for other Buddhist traditions, including Japanese, Tibetan, and Theravada, often monastics are not required to be vegetarian. For lay people, they are free to choose to take a vow to become vegetarian.



## Climate Project Presentation

On Sunday, December 11, speaker Nadja Krylov from the Climate Project gave a very informative presentation on current climate issues. This grassroots environmental organization is headed by former V.P. Al Gore and its continuing mission is to raise awareness of climate change issues.





## Special Report: Energy Efficiency in the Home

Two-fer's are good deeds that benefit yourself and the community. Making your home energy efficient is a three-fer, because you pay less for utilities (summer and winter); your home is more comfortable; and you reduce what is on average the largest cause of global warming: home energy. According to *Energy Efficient Homes for Dummies*, space heating is on average 47% of total energy used. Americans have an average BTU per person per year of 339, while western Europeans average 149, and Japanese average 172. Thus, Americans can reduce global warming – and personal costs, by investing a little time and money into their homes. You can calculate your own personal global warming impact by analyzing your annual energy bills: 12.1 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> are generated per BTU of natural gas.

The average energy loss is allocated as follows: 35% air leaks through gaps; 18% through doors and windows; 17% through floors and into basement; 13% through walls; and 10% through ceiling. It makes sense to address air leaks first, particularly those areas of your home which are the draftiest. Here are some ideas:

**Doors:** On a windy day, do you feel air coming through the doors or windows? For the top and sides of doors, you can use foam strips so that the door closes up against the seal. For doors that are warped at the top or bottom, double strips may be required. Thin strips of foam are even recommended for the inside joints of the door.

You may have noticed that attached to the bottom of doors is often a metal strip with a rubber skirt. This can help, but may not be entirely efficient. A recent product, the Dual Draft Stopper, is a dual-foam strip that slides under your door, and is very efficient and easy to install. Alternatively, a stuffed 'sock' on the inside of your door can also reduce drafts.

**Windows:** Dual and triple-paned glass can be much more efficient than a single pane with storm window, but can also be expensive. Covering glass with plastic can help with leaky windows. These products are much more

transparent than a decade ago.

Doors and windows also leak air through the edges of the molding. It is useful to caulk around window and door frames. Caulking is easy to do: you will need a caulk gun, the correct colored caulk, and a finishing tool to help you smooth the caulk seal. Most caulks (except transparent) can be painted over, in case you are sloppy. ☺

**External Interfaces:** Look all around your house (including closets) for bathroom/fan pipes or electrical/cable connections that vent to the outside or non-insulated areas of your home. These should also be caulked, since they are a major cause of air leaks. In some cases, the gaps are so major that you will require spray foam to caulk around them. Insulating spray foam, like caulk, is inexpensive. Two types of spray foam cans include for 'Big Gaps' and smaller gaps (< 1 inch). Both expand as you spray to seal and insulate. Experiment in a hidden area. The finished result will not look uniform, and is best hidden in closets or basements. If you make a mistake, let the product dry before attempting to remove.

**Optional air leaks:** Additional gaps that cause problems include fire places and recessed lights. Keep the fire-place damper closed as much as possible. Some recessed light fixtures have holes within them, to allow incandescent lights to cool. Other types of recessed lights can take insulation around them.

**Attics:** Previously attics were vented to prevent mold. Since insulation does not stop air leaks, this method was energy-inefficient. The new method is to try to seal the home tight and insulate inside the sealed home. Mold is prevented by ensuring that wet bathroom or kitchen air is vented out by a fan. Be sure to keep the fan on for 20 minutes after a shower!

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## Special Report: Energy Efficiency in the Home (cont.)

**Heating Vents:** You want 100% of your temperature-controlled air to be delivered inside your home, and not inside the walls or other unconditioned areas. Duct seams are a prime problem for heat loss. If you have forced air, it is a good idea to seal all accessible ducts. Duct seams should be sealed with an aluminum-covered tape, which will hold long-term. Connections between the duct and your air vent can be sealed with foam or caulk. If some of your ducts go through unconditioned space, then use duct insulation around the ducts to retain heat. Changing your heater's filter regularly also improves efficiency.

If your home uses radiators, water pipes can be insulated in minutes using a tolerant-to-high-temperature type of pipe insulation sleeve. This insulation can also help faucet hot water pipes be more efficient.

**Optimize your thermostat:** Why heat your home when you are not home? In the winter it is possible to set the thermostat to 55 or 60 degrees, when you are at work or are sleeping. Set the thermostat to warm the house right before you get home or wake up. Sleeping in a cooler home, as long as you have a nice warm quilt, can be refreshing.

In the summer, notice the temperature difference between outside and inside. If it is cooler outside (such as at night), keep the windows open. During the day, close the house up and rely on your well-sealed home to keep you cool. Or, if you use an air conditioner, you will require less energy.

**Expert Help:** By performing these low-cost steps, you can make homes cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter – particularly those nooks that tend to be excessively cool or warm. However, sometimes you will want an expert to help you make the right decisions for your home. An expert can find major problems you are unlikely to find by yourself, and determine where insulation is poor. An energy auditor will set up a blower in your door to blow air out of your home. With a temperature-sensitive camera, the auditor can observe where cold air is leaking from outside. Often you can feel the air blowing in through joints. This is hard to reproduce on your own, but you can try by blowing out air with your fans, and testing suspect areas with an incense stick to determine if the smoke rises straight up or swirls at an angle.

The auditor can also help you determine the correct amount of insulation you should use, and prioritize your efficiency efforts. You can find a local, certified auditor at: <http://ilenergyraters.org>. An auditor will cost \$400-\$500, but will provide a useful report. The auditor should be scheduled for when the difference in temperature between outside and inside is 20 degrees or more.

**Conclusion.** The efforts you take to seal and make your home efficient will help your budget every year. You can find the tools and supplies you need at a hardware store, such as Home Depot or Menards. The store sales people can help you to find tools/supplies, which will carry specific directions for use. Most supplies will cost less than \$10 each, but will save you much over the long term.

Global warming causes extreme weather, since hotter air holds more water, and dries out the ground more thoroughly. We are seeing effects of this extreme weather worldwide. Particularly those of us who are older have noticed the changes in weather patterns and the increased frequency of severe storms. Improving your home efficiency can reduce your global warming impact in a major way – and save you money for many years to come!



## 2011 Holiday Party

On Saturday, December 10, 2011 we held our annual Holiday party featuring lots of delicious food, good cheer and a fun visit from Santa himself. Santa wished everyone a happy holiday season, passed out gifts for all, then danced the night away!



## Dharma Drum Mountain Chicago Chapter

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Visit us on the web:

<http://www.ddmbachicago.org/>

The DDMBA Chicago is part of the International Cultural and Educational Foundation of Dharma Drum Mountain, DDM, founded in Taiwan by Venerable Sheng Yen. DDM is dedicated to the spiritual and educational needs of people at all stages of their lives.

The regular activities that take place at our Center comprise of two main groups: practice activities and social/caring activities .

Practice activities include Chinese Dharma Study Group, English Dharma Study Group, Meditation, Chanting, Sutra Prostration, and Monthly Gatherings. In addition, the meditation hall is open to the public for self meditation every Sunday morning. Currently our English programs include monthly book discussion, weekly meditation, and other special events. New programs are added often.

In addition to our English newsletter, the Chicago Chapter publishes a monthly newsletter in Chinese. Both the English and Chinese newsletters are archived in the newsletters section of the DDMBA Chicago website.



Fall Fundraising Dinner, Friday, November 4, 2011 (also showing a special visit by our very own Glam Rockstar!)