

Power of Dharma

Bon Myong Sunim

Sifu teaches us that the direction of creating an event is to have harmony, communication, and to put down our ideas to make the event a success with a happy ending. In the temple rules, it says humans have two kinds of jobs. First is one's inside job, which is to keep clear mind. Second is one's outside job, which is to cut off all desires and help others. In my experience, if I do the inside job well, the outside job will be done well too.

In the temple, the resident nuns would take up different roles and responsibilities. For example, we have the dharma room sunim, the kitchen master, the housemaster, the teacher's attendant, and so on. When there is an event, all sunims and lay volunteers would come together to make the event. Usually, this is the time to test my practice. I am not a very organized person and am not in the habit of writing down all the work flow and arrangements before the event. Sometimes, because of unclear communication, misunderstandings happen and create problems for others. In the end, these problems come back to me. Cause and effect is always clear. So, I started to reflect on how I can use dharma to transform my weakness, put down my opinion, open up to learning new things, and transform my karma.

One time, the sunims and volunteers were setting up the altar, preparing for an event with a timeline. An emergency happened: a toilet pipe burst! As the housemaster was not

around, I needed to find someone to come fix the problem right away. If I just walked away without communicating clearly, I would have created frustration in others, who in return would say something about Bon Myong leaving the scene without any word. And upon hearing their speech, I would feel unhappy, and negative emotions would appear.

I remember Sifu always teaches that whenever any situation appears, first I should remind myself not to be so impulsive. So I paused, used my in-breath and out-breath to calm myself. Then I could see clearly, hear clearly, and with a clear mind, I said to the volunteers, "Please continue this work. There's an emergency in the temple that I need to take care of. Once I'm done, I will be back and work with you again." I finished by explaining clearly the rest of the tasks. The volunteers felt assured and at ease.

I am happy that I could use dharma to help transform my emotions into harmony, manage the whole situation, get us into a win-win situation, and have a happy ending. This is the power of working together and the power of dharma. ♦

Bon Myong Sunim became a haengja in 2002 at Su Bong Zen Monastery. She took novice precepts in 2003 and bhikkhuni precepts in 2008. She has been living and practicing at Su Bong Zen Monastery since then.

[15

POWER OF SHARING

When Someone Is Hungry, Offer Them Food

Grace Bruneel

COVID-19 has brought about many big changes in everyone's life. With the widespread loss of jobs, new groups of people are joining the poverty line. In 2021, Su Bong Zen Monastery raised some funds and worked with different organizations to distribute vegetarian lunchboxes and daily necessities to the needy. More than eleven times, Zen Master Dae Kwan, together with the sunims and volunteers, distributed more than 8,500 lunchboxes to the elderly, the poor, and the homeless.

In the past, recipients of lunchboxes were usually elderly, but now we are seeing more and more young families, in which both parents suddenly lost their jobs, coming to receive lunchboxes. We are grateful to the organizations who responded creatively and with sensitivity, so that these activities could still go on in the worst of times. One of the organizations, Food Angel, even introduced lunchbox vending machines, which work with QR codes. In this way, families can get their lunchboxes safely simply by scanning QR codes with their phones.

The last distribution was done in memory of Myong Hae Sunim. The organization announced there would be lunchbox distribution together with bags of rice and other gifts from Su Bong Zen Monastery. As past experience had shown its popularity, we expected about two hundred people. We ordered 230 boxes so that there would be some left over. Still, 260 people turned up, and we were short by thirty lunchboxes. We had to solve this situation on the spot, because we wanted to make everybody happy. After some discussion, finally wisdom appeared, and the problem was solved. The last thirty sets of lunchboxes and gifts were divided into sixty portions. The last sixty people each got a little bit less, but all got lots of happiness! ♦

Grace Bruneel started to visit Su Bong Zen Monastery in the 1990s and started practicing in 2000. In 2002, she took five precepts, and in 2012 she took ten precepts. She's been practicing under the guidance of Zen Master Dae Kwan and helping the Zen center with translation.