

THE INFLUENCE OF SHENG-YEN'S LAY DISCIPLES IN THE GROWTH OF BUDDHIST MEDITATION IN THE UNITED STATES

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ABSTRACT

Sheng-Yen 聖嚴 (1930-2009) through monastic training in Taiwan, graduate studies in Japan, and teaching mediation in the west, became one of the most prominent figures of modern Chan Buddhism. He established the Dharma Drum Mountain or Fagushan 法鼓山 as a spiritual, cultural, and educational foundation in 1989. His influence in the west has been aided through selecting and ordaining several of his western disciples as lay dharma heirs. The work of these disciples has had a significant impact on the development of meditation practices in the United States through their teaching and publishing. Today, California lawyer Gilbert Gutierrez and London physician Simon Child, two of Sheng-yen's five lay dharma heirs, have helped shape the characteristics of Buddhist meditative pluralism in the United States and have been instrumental in defining Dharma Drum meditation for its western followers.

KEYWORDS

Sheng-yen, Fagushan, Dharma Drum, Gilbert Gutierrez, Chan