



Buddhist Council of New York Annual Forum 2025

ADAPTING TO CHANGE: BUDDHIST TEACHINGS FOR TODAY

Saturday, March 22nd, 2025 | 1:00 – 4:00 PM (EDT)

The Shinnyo Center | 19 W 36th St., NY, NY 10018



Program Schedule

12:40 PM	Check-in
1:00 PM	Opening Session <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rev. Doyeon Park, President, Buddhist Council of New York• Rev. Qalvy Grainzvolt, The Shinnyo Center
1:10 PM	Collective Reflection: Responding to Recent Temple Vandalism <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rev. James Lynch, Vice President, BCNY• Officer Andrew Tadros, Clergy Outreach Division, NYPD• Officer April Chen, Manhattan South Outreach, NYPD• Rev. Chloe Breyer, The Interfaith Center of New York
2:00 PM	Ven. Chang Hwa, Chan Meditation Center
2:20 PM	Suryapala, Triratna Buddhist Community
2:40 PM	Bhante Kondañña, Staten Island Buddhist Vihara
3:00 PM	Dr. Alex Tan, Tzu Chi Center
3:20 PM	Group Dialogue
4:00 PM	Closing





Rev. James A. Lynch, Jr. is a Dharma Teacher as authorized by the lay Buddhist Organization Rissho Kosei Kai. He is an official representative for Rissho Kosei Kai to the United Nations. James sits on the Board of Religions for Peace USA, and is a Trustee to the prestigious international Parliament of World Religions. James is a tenured professor and Chairman of the Business Management Department in the Koppelman School of Business located at Brooklyn College, where he teaches Workplace Happiness and Spirituality.



Rev. Qalvy Grainzvolt is a native New Yorker and an ordained Shinnyo-en Buddhist priest. Qalvy has been focused on service and wellbeing including during his time in the U.S. Army National Guard, as a police chaplain in Westchester County, and the first Buddhist chaplain in the history of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) and New York City Transit system. In 2018, Qalvy helped bring mindfulness to the New York City Police Department as part of its official training curriculum. He continues to promote mindfulness as a visiting mindfulness instructor for the Fire Department of the City of New York (FDNY), after a tenure of teaching meditation for various New York-based organizations such as Bryant Park's official programs, the Horticultural Society of New York, and at CNN news headquarters. Qalvy also holds a Master's degree and professional licensure in clinical mental health counseling. He currently uses those skills in psychotherapy with incarcerated individuals in the jail system of the Westchester County Department of Corrections.



Ven. Chang-Hwa, Ph.D. is the Director of Chan Meditation Center. After completing monastic education at Dharma Drum Sangha University in Taiwan and receiving full ordination in 2005, Venerable served as Director of the Department of International Relations and Development in DDM Taiwan. In addition to her current position as Director, Ven. Chang-Hwa also supervises DDM Dharmapala Groups in North America, gives public lectures and leads meditation programs. She holds a Ph.D. in Biochemistry from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



Suryapala (Todd Johnson) is an ordained Dharmachari within the Triratna Buddhist Order and has been a practicing Buddhist since 2018. Outside of his Buddhist practice, he is a Managing Director within the Firmwide AI team at a major Wall Street firm. As part of his responsibilities, he works with key stakeholders, establishing structure and controls to ensure his firm is scaling Generative AI in a secure, responsible and compliant manner. Previously, Suryapala spent nearly 30 years in the Financial Services industry in the US, UK and Hong Kong working within large global banks leading business and technology teams, as well as co-founding his own Investment Management firm, Ivaldi Capital, in 2010. Todd graduated from Northwestern University with a B.S. in Industrial Engineering.



Bhante Kondañña is a Sri Lankan Buddhist monk who began his monastic journey in 1968 with his novice ordination. He received his formal monastic training in Colombo, Sri Lanka, and earned a BA in Buddhist Philosophy from the University of Kelaniya. In 1985, he came to the United States to serve and contribute his skills at the New York Buddhist Vihara. During this time, he pursued further education, attending classes at CUNY and earning a BS in Social Work. In 1997, he went on to obtain an MSW from Fordham University in New York. Bhante Kondañña firmly believes in the importance of a strong spiritual foundation in life. Through his teachings, experiences, and compassionate service, he hopes to enrich and uplift the lives of individuals in New York City and beyond, wherever his path of service may lead.



Dr. Alex Tan is an Associate Professor at Tzu Chi University (TCU), in the city of Hualien, Taiwan and a practitioner of the Jingsi Abode. His research interests include buildings ventilation, thermal comfort analysis as well as environmental education and sustainable practices, with several years of teaching experience in sustainable development and environmental protection. He has co-authored several scientific publications and serves as a reviewer in a number of journals. Incorporating awareness and attitude into pro-environmental behavior, he has taken up a vegetarian diet for many years as well as participates as an active volunteer in areas of charity care, disaster relief, youth development and environmental movements.