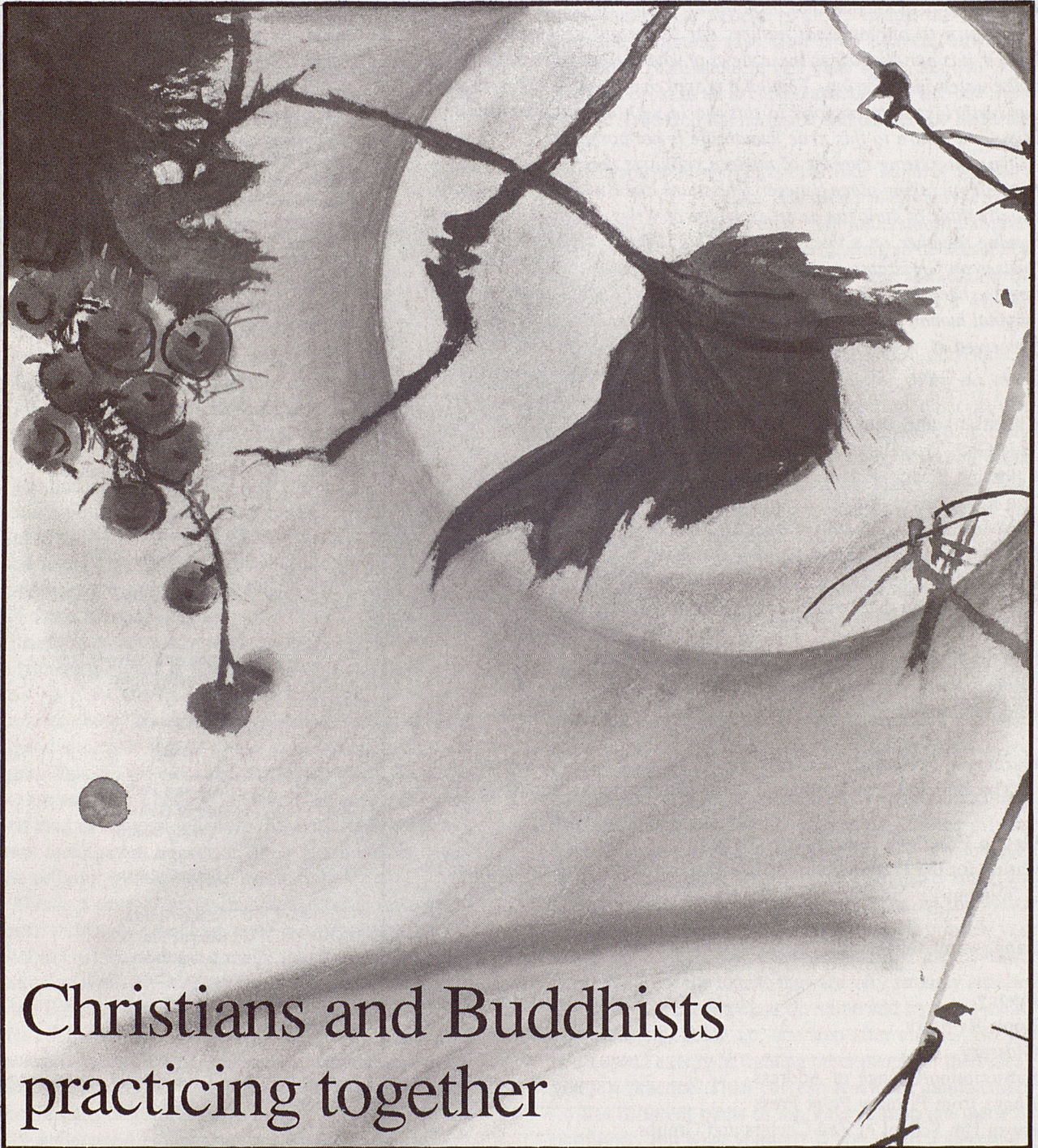


Primary Point

An international journal of Buddhism

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Christians and Buddhists
practicing together

In this issue

These days our world is changing very rapidly. Although this gives rise to many serious problems, it also provides an opportunity for an expansion of our awareness of what it means to be human. Today people of diverse religious beliefs find themselves living together in the same country or even next door to each other. Our present world situation challenges us to let go of our preconceived concepts and opinions of the ways things are, whether they be political, ethnic, economic or religious, and return to our original nature, our birthright as human beings. Indeed, it is our clinging to these views of who is right and who is wrong that creates our suffering. Though it is spoken of in many different ways our birthright is to respond to this world with love and compassion. Without a return to this, true human life is not possible.

One interesting current of modern religious dialogue is the cross-fertilization taking place between Christians and Buddhists. Though we usually think of dialogue as an exchange of views, it can also refer to a coming together on a deeper level. This issue of PRIMARY POINT focuses on Christians and Buddhists who have come together to practice, to share their meditation traditions, and to directly experience their original human nature. In fact, it is this direct experience, however it is conceived of, which will bond us together in love and compassion.

Do An Sunim, JDPSN

Christians and Buddhists practicing together

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True God, True Buddha

Zen Master Seung Sahn

Adapted from a talk during a retreat at Providence Zen Center in December, 1990.

Question: I'm a Christian, and I would like to know, is there anything you would like us to understand that we tend not to understand?

ZMSS: Christianity says God made everything—good and bad, heaven and earth, human beings and animals and so on. He worked for six days, then rested.

But in Buddhism, there is no original cause or creator; there is no coming, no going, no existence, no non-existence; all of these are opposites thinking. Sun and moon, light and dark, day and night—all these are names; the world of names is opposites thinking. "God" is also a name; it's also opposite thinking. True God has no name, no form. In no name/no form, there is no coming, no going—no opposite thinking. That which is beyond all names and forms is always bright. That is True God.

The purpose of Buddhism is to find primary point. What is the primary point of this universe? The Bible says, "God made everything." But what is the primary point of God? Where does God come from?

These days, not many young people are becoming monks or nuns. I was in Paris—a big Catholic university had closed its doors. No more students! Any society that has a "good situation" doesn't have young monks, only old monks. This is a different age, a different mind. Old-style religion was to just believe in God. Now people check—what kind of religion will help me, help society? Monk or not monk is not important. They like new idea, new-style religion, perhaps some meditation.

This is a time of great change and religions need to adapt; a change in teaching style is necessary. A simple belief in God is no longer enough for many people. They want to understand: What is God? What is my true self? In the Bible, it says, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." What is this "I"? Is this "I" God? Is this God separate from me? If this God is not separate from me, are God and I two or one? Through meditation practice these questions can be resolved on a deep level. Then one can truly understand religion, understand this world. In meditation all opposites become one point: mind, God,

dharma, truth. You can call it many things, but this point is before all names and forms.

If you only talk about a belief in God, then there are many questions: Where is God? Inside the body or outside? Someone says God is in heaven; nowadays spaceships roam about in vast outer space, but don't find any God because all is curved space. Here is God? Here is God? True God has no inside and outside, no name and form.

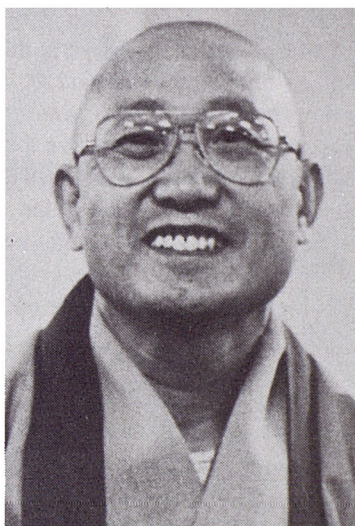
Nowadays many Christians like Thomas Merton's books. He didn't only analyze Biblical words. He understood and practiced Zen meditation, so he was able to connect with his true self, and wrote about this connection. That's why his books are so popular.

Any kind of religion, any kind of style doesn't matter. *Why do this?* Making this direction clear is very important; if this direction is clear, then your life is clear. If you only hold your religion, your idea, then you have a problem. If you are not holding "my religion," not holding "my practice," have a clear direction, and only try, try, try, then you attain something. Clear direction and try mind are most important.

Zen mind means put down any idea, any form. If your direction is clear and you completely put down everything, then you will attain something. When you attain something, you connect with everything else.

All religions are like different paths to the mountaintop. The top of the mountain is very clear; it's the primary point. But there are many paths leading to this point; there is the eastern road, western road, southern road, and northern road. When people begin climbing the mountain, they are always fighting: "My way is correct, your way is not correct." But from the bottom of the mountain, they cannot see the top, so they are very strongly attached to "my way." Having clear direction and try mind means just going up, going up, one step after another. So you don't spend energy in fighting other people or their ideas; you just practice. Then you can reach the mountaintop.

The different paths to the mountaintop are made by our mind. But what is mind? If you try to understand it intellectually, you will not find it. Our mind is very big,



Zen Master Seung Sahn

but it's also small. A very sharp needle cannot touch this mind, because this mind is smaller than the tip of the needle. But our mind is also bigger than the whole universe. Sometimes our mind is very bright, sometimes very dark. If you make "my path," you also make "my mind." But if you let go of "my mind," you become a Buddha. Then any path will lead you to the mountaintop.

If you control your mind, you control everything. But if you say, "I control my mind," then what is this that controls the mind? Is it some other mind that controls the mind or is it no mind? Also, how do you control your mind? Where is your mind? Are you and your mind two things or one? Same or different? Big problem! That's all thinking. POW! Put it all down, OK? Don't think!

The Diamond Sutra says "All things are impermanent. A pure view is to see all appearances as non-appearances. When all appearances and non-appearances disappear, that's complete stillness. Then you can see Buddha-nature." But if everything is impermanent, I am also impermanent; Buddha is also impermanent. Then how can I see Buddha? How can impermanence see impermanence?

If you check the words in the Bible or in the Diamond Sutra, then it's all checking, all opposites thinking. But truth means there are no opposites. No opposites means the absolute. If you are checking, then everything is not correct. If you are not checking, everything is correct. That is Zen. The Diamond Sutra teaches that silence is better than holiness. And the Bible says "Be still and know that I am God." This silent mind is very important. How do we transmit this silent mind from me to you? Buddha picked up a flower, and only Mahakashyapa smiled. Then Buddha said, "My true dharma, I transmit to you." But that was a big mistake on Buddha's part. If I was Mahakashyapa at that time, I would have said, "No, thank you, Buddha, I already have dharma." Then Buddha would have a problem!!

So, already everybody has dharma, already everybody has truth, already everybody has the correct way and correct life. Already everybody has, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." So why does anyone need transmission from someone else? Open your mouth and it's already a mistake. But our job is to help all beings. So, we only use this mouth to teach the dharma and help all beings. That, we say, is "tongue formula."

If you only keep a try mind, a don't-know mind, then your center becomes stronger, stronger, stronger. Then everything you hear, smell, see, taste, touch is better than the Buddha's speech, better than the Bible's speech. That's enlightenment. Then you can save all beings from suffering.

Zen Master Seung Sahn is founding teacher of the international Kwan Um School of Zen. □

Centering prayer Or, Teachings From the Hotel California

Father Robert Morin, OMI

Adapted from a talk at a Christian-Buddhist workshop at Providence Zen Center in January, 1991.

I'd like to address the practice of centering prayer as a form of contemplative prayer. I'll begin with something that Zen Master Seung Sahn said, that the basis of all religion is the phrase contained in Psalm 46: "Be still, and know that I am God." Sounds very simple; actually, it's a lifetime project.

When we hear the phrase "centering prayer," people naturally think, "find your center." But *where* is your center?

It's not something you can find, so to speak. It's more intuitive than that. I know, afterwards, when I've been acting in a centered way, when I've been behaving out of that center. Other times I know very well I'm acting like a perfect airhead, when the internal chatter is covering over all of reality. In the West we tend to practice religion from the ears up: very cerebral, sort of like the rock group Talking Heads. We have a lot of words about God and relatively little experience of God. In the words of one old priest, who used to smoke regular cigarettes and was offered a filtered cigarette, "Bah! That's like kissing a girl through a plate glass window. You get the idea, but not the effect." Ideas-about and experience-of are two entirely different realms.

When we live from up here, the rest of the body dangles from that center of consciousness and gets ignored. We don't have that much of a body consciousness until you sit down to practice and your legs say, "Guess who's here?" A certain wisdom comes right back up from the body. The Orthodox Christians locate the spirit in the top third of the heart. While practicing the Jesus prayer they stare down at the heart, the top third, the part we fill in with cholesterol. That's where they'd say your soul is. In Oriental tradition, the center is the nerve-knot about two inches below your navel; literally, your physical center. If you were to stand me up, measure me, and find the halfway point, you'd see that's just about where it is. But if I were to say, "My center is right here in my head," you'd say, "You don't know how to measure too well." I wouldn't know how to live too well, either!

Finding one's center in centering prayer is done in God. It's not just a project we do. Otherwise, it's simply narcissism, navel-gazing. I'm reminded of the parakeet

we had in the monastery laundry room. It spent a considerable amount of time chattering away at a mirror, thinking it was another parakeet. Unfortunately, I suspect that a number of people pray that way, too: a long dialogue with oneself. "Be still, and know that I am God." It's very easy mistakenly to think, "Oh, if I'm still, then I'll know God." God is unknowable. We can have an experience, but not conceptual knowledge.

Where did this all come from, this kind of practice that has come to be called "centering prayer"? A monk named John Cassian travelled to various monasteries in the East, talking to people about their spiritual practice, gaining bits of wisdom. When he returned to his monastery, he taught what is sometimes called "monologistic prayer," from two Greek words meaning "one word." What he did was simply teach a phrase from the Psalms: "O God, come to my assistance; O Lord, make haste to help me." Repeat that continually, he said, and you will be in the presence of God.

As a matter of fact, in Christian tradition, there is nowhere you can be that you are *not* in the presence of God. I remember a voice in the back of a chapel where I was a seminarian that would say, "Let us place ourselves in the presence of God and adore him." And I'd think "Where in the heck do you think you're going to go?" As the Book of Jonah points out, you can't run away from God, you can only run around in God. We are already enfolded. It's like the song from the Eagles, *Hotel California*: "You can check out any time you like, but you can never leave."

It's a little distance from the Eagles to John Cassian, but I return to John. He taught his monks what we call "mantra prayer," which frightens some people. They think a mantra is something very exotic, a magical word. It's simply a phrase, repeated, that helps to induce calm:

In Zen, "clear mind, clear mind, clear mind: don't know." In Christianity, "O God, come to my assistance, O Lord, make haste to help me."

From the fourth century and John Cassian, we jump to the fourteenth century and England, with the unknown author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*. It's more a letter, a very lengthy letter written from a priest or a monk to a young disciple. The point that he makes is this: God cannot be grasped by our concepts. Between ourselves and God is a cloud of unknowing. "Anything you think you know, forget it." The only way to break through the cloud of unknowing and know God is through love, and love is expressed in that prayer word.

That's the basis for centering prayer. It came to us through various routes. In the eyes of some people, centering prayer is simply baptized transcendental meditation—"the Catholics did it again!" Much more than that, I think, centering prayer is an attempt to regain something that's always been there in the tradition that got lost, ignored. At any given point in the history of any religion, people have to move often and rapidly. We throw stuff in boxes and put it in the attic. Later we wonder, "Where is that?" So you go back to the attic and fish around until you find it—"I need this, this is valuable." The tradition has always been there, but it went underground.

In the eyes of a lot of people, if you're going to do this kind of prayer and quiet, well, sock yourself away in a monastery. Double-lock the doors, stay there, and do it. The fact is, it's our common heritage. A contemplative dimension is part of everyone's life. When we stop long enough, when we stop grasping, wanting, objecting to the world, we can discover something within us, another dimension of ourselves that wants to be still.

Father Morin is director of the Oblate Retreat House in Hudson, New Hampshire. □



Sigita Subeityte 92

The Jesus Prayer

Sanctifying the Present Moment

Father Kevin Hunt, OCSO

Adapted from a talk at a Christian-Buddhist workshop at Providence Zen Center in January, 1991.

The Jesus prayer is a very short phrase: "Lord Jesus Christ, son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." It springs from the word of Jesus that we have in the Gospel of Saint John, where Jesus in his last discourse to his disciples says, "You have never asked anything in my name. Now, anything you ask in my name will be given to you." The idea of asking in the name of someone is something we're not too accustomed to these days. We think instead of back door politics: Knock, knock, knock. "Who's there?" "George sent me." The door opens and out comes the little money bag and off we go.

In the Near East of Biblical times, "name" meant the presence or reality of the one whose name was called. That's part of the reason why the name of the God of Israel became unspeakable: the name was never adequate to the reality. So asking in Jesus' name is making present the full reality of what Jesus is, which is being present immediately to God.

This presence is not a confrontational one. It's not the presence of speaking with someone on the phone. It is an immediate and absolute union, like the presence of two people in love: not something you intellectualize, not even necessarily emotional. It's just there.

One of the best examples: two people who've been married a long time and have been through the good times and the bad together. One can be in the kitchen and the other in the living room, but they're completely aware.

Or one is doing a crossword puzzle and the other writing a letter, but they're absolutely present to each other.

The Jesus prayer is a vehicle to achieving that presence with God. Using words makes it easier for us, just as

between two people who love each other a glance or kiss makes it happen.

The Christian monastic tradition as a formal way of living goes back to the late third and early fourth centuries. The early monks, like the first Zen monks, were basically an uneducated people. They were the peasants of Egypt and Syria: hard-headed, ignorant, dumb people, at least according to the intellectuals of Alexandria and Jerusalem. At that time the name of Jesus was used as a prayer, in conjunction with various techniques. One of them, was even watching your breath, which is so common in Zen meditation.

The monks would go into their cells and sit on small benches, four to five inches high. In

Egypt they were made of papyrus; in Syria and Israel, probably clay or wood. Sitting on the bench, they would repeat this short prayer over and over again.

In repeating the Jesus prayer you are vocally making concrete who and what you are exactly at this moment. In Catholic tradition, we use the phrase "sacrament of the present moment," indicating the reality of God right here. God is present because we're sitting here, not because we would like to be walking outside. While fully conscious that I am sitting right here, I use this short prayer.

Tradition tells us that the prayer is a complete compendium of the Christian revelation. "Lord": a term reserved



for God, a translation of the word “adonai,” used in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament. “Jesus Christ”: Jesus the ultimate and full revelation, God’s self-giving to us. “Son of God”: expressing the Christian realization that God in this person has given himself completely.

“Have mercy on me, a sinner”: this phrase is the hang-up for many of us. “Sinner” seems to represent all of our faults, all our failures to live up to some standard. I shave my head, my colleague doesn’t: sinner, sinner!

But the term “sinner” has a different significance in this prayer: we accept our condition as limited human beings, with all of the aches and pains that involves. We don’t set ourselves up as being holier-than-thou. We don’t make moral judgments on ourselves or others. In fact, in the Christian tradition, if anybody is sin, it’s Jesus Christ. The Epistle to the Hebrews tells us, “he became sin for us.” In the same way, he becomes sin for the totality of humanity. Christians believe that in Jesus, God himself became man: there’s nothing outside of the human condition that is foreign to him. He became a human being exactly the way that you and I are human beings. All of my emotions, all of the things that transpire within me are brought into the loving compassion and mercy of God when I repeat the prayer.

The vocal repetition of this prayer creates a rhythm which becomes part of us as we go through life, especially when we go into meditation—and there’s no place like meditation for experiencing the limitations of what it means to be a human being. All of our pains and frustrations come back to us. The greatest problem in meditation is that we start chasing after all of these things, like a dog chasing its tail: around and around she goes, where she stops, nobody knows. “Why did I do this?” “Why didn’t they realize what I meant?” “But of course they should have known.”

To take all of that as it flows in and bring it to this prayer is to bring forgiveness. God’s forgiveness means we forgive ourselves, and in so doing accept ourselves for who we are.

Because I am who I am concretely, right here, right now, I am the totality of the pain of humanity. I am the pain of what’s occurring in Iraq right now. I am the pain of all those whom I hurt. The mercy of God is poured forth in me and through me upon the whole of creation.

One of the great aids to this prayer over the ages has been beads, such as the rosary. It’s amazing how just making a bead pass through your fingers as you say a short prayer can be helpful to you. It makes you do something simple and physical. The traditional Eastern Orthodox set of beads has one hundred.

A lot of people find it helpful to set a certain number of repetitions a day. In “The Way of the Pilgrim,” the seeker asks how to pray and is told, “Pray continually;

this is the way.” How do I do that? “I’ll say this Jesus prayer a thousand times a day. Twenty-eight beads: if I go around this many times a day, I’ll do a thousand.” You reach a thousand. “Then I’ll do two thousand.” You reach two thousand. “I’ll do three thousand.”

And you do it no matter what happens. If someone starts banging an ashcan and you think, “They know I’m in here meditating. Look what they’re doing!,” you’ll never get it done. But if you say, “I’ve got to go around this string twice in the next five minutes,” you’ll do it.

Gradually the prayer travels away from your lips. It’s a good thing to start off saying it aloud. There are even times when you have to go back to doing that. I’ve been in a monastery over thirty-five years. There are still days that I have to go back, moments when I’m as mad as can be with the people I live with. I go into church or go off by myself to meditate, and find that I’m strangling So-and-so. If they were there, aaarrggghh!

John Climacus wrote a book called *The Divine Ladder* in the sixth century. He says, “Here I am, walking around the monastery. I go by the cells of hermits and I hear these raging arguments going on. I go in and I knock on the door, figuring that someone is being killed, and a solitary hermit comes and answers the door.” John was one of the great teachers of this prayer.

Or I find myself starving for affection. I go off by myself in the woods and shout “LORD JESUS CHRIST, SON OF GOD, HAVE MERCY ON ME, A SINNER!”

Gradually, it goes from the mouth to the ear. You find yourself running out of breath, running out of voice, just forming the words with your lips. Then the lips stop, and it goes in deeper, to the inner ear. The words are still there. It goes from the inner ear to the breath, by itself, as you inhale, exhale: inhale, “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,” exhale, “have mercy on me, a sinner.”

We are accepting the totality of our humanity and transforming it. Not making it into an angelic nature, because we’re not angels—we’re human beings. Transforming it into what it is: that is the work of the prayer. Not looking for experiences, visions, special states, the twenty-five levels of consciousness, to walk on water, but to know that this, right now, is Jesus Christ, present to the whole world, in me, through me, because of me.

And so the Jesus prayer becomes a refrain. Driving your car, the Jesus prayer can be in your car. Taking a shower, the Jesus prayer is there. Going to sleep, the Jesus prayer is there. But as you do it, don’t get attached to the Jesus prayer. In the quiet, be quiet. The name of Jesus after a while becomes, as St. Bernard of Clairvaux says, “honey on the lips, music in the ear, and a melody in your heart.”

Father Hunt is at Saint Joseph’s Abbey in Spencer, Massachusetts. □

The Mustard Seed

Barbara Rhodes, JDPSN

(Editor's note: The author draws from the Gospel of Thomas, a Gnostic Christian text dating to the first few centuries A.D. Since their discovery in Egypt in 1945, the "Gnostic Gospels" have inspired a renewed exploration of Jesus' person and message. Although not considered authoritative by Christian churches, these texts continue to gain in influence both within and beyond Christianity.)

Adapted from a talk at a Christian-Buddhist conference at Providence Zen Center in October, 1990.

In Christianity and Buddhism, the heart of true meditation is to be intimate with your own experience. One of the inspiring things in the lives of Jesus and Buddha is their innocence, their questioning. They had examples and teachers, but ultimately each went off on his own.

There are some quotes from Jesus that I find particularly relevant. One is, "If you bring forth what is within you, what you have will save you." One of the first things Zen Master Seung Sahn taught me to do was to ask, "What am I?" Suppose you were sitting at Jesus' knee two thousand years ago, and he said that about "bringing forth that which is within you." And then he didn't say any more, he just walked away. Those would be your instructions. Over time, maybe you would begin to ask, naturally, what it is within you that could save you? What is that?

In our school, we have three month retreats in the winter called Kyol Che, "tight dharma." We repeat and repeat and repeat the same schedule every day, in silence. There are about ten hours of just gazing at the floor in silence. Every day there's a work period, every day there's breakfast, lunch, and dinner. The repetition is so that our mind can rest a little and ask, "What am I?" or "What is within me that is going to save me? How can I find that?" There's a tremendous gift in that repetition.

It doesn't take too much life experience to realize that we could use a little saving; that there is discomfort, disease, sadness, selfishness. Religion gives us qualities to aspire to, such as generosity, patience, and forbearance.

There are mantras and phrases used in Buddhism, as with ejaculatory prayer in Christianity, that replace a discriminating mind—a mind that has preferences and aversions and attractions which are out of balance—with just that prayer, that repetition. Just as a child will touch something hot out of ignorance and burn her hand, so adults will touch hot subjects—or objects that we're attached to—and get into trouble. If we repeat the phrase or prayer, we replace what hurts with a mind that is

steady, clear, open, and present.

Jesus talked about the mustard seed, "the tiniest of all seeds. But when it falls on prepared soil, it grows into a large plant and shelters the birds of the sky." The mustard seed has been used metaphorically in Buddhism, too. Our mind is the same. Sometimes our Buddha-nature, our God-nature, our ability to see clearly is very, very tiny. We have bad days. We have bad lives, some of us! So you start right now. You don't think of yourself as being bad or good or proficient or clumsy. Simply regard yourself as having that seed.

Prepared soil is very important. With a casual lifestyle, it's difficult to attain your true self completely. But it's also said, "in sterile water, fish cannot live." If the water is too clean, there will be nothing to eat. Each of us has to find the "middle way" for ourselves. We have to find the relationship with this world that will work for us. It can't be too loose or too tight.

I lived at Providence Zen Center for seventeen years. Every morning, the wake-up bell would remind me, "It's time to practice." The Buddha taught that food, sex, sleep, fame, and wealth are especially sticky. They keep you in bed in the morning; you're exhausted from not being in a balanced relationship with one or another of them. The bell helps you stay in balance. You've gotten up early, so you have that time to ask, "What is it within me that can save me, keep me out of that stickiness?"

Those five sticky things are inherently neither good nor bad; it's our relationship to them that matters. Zen Master Seung Sahn says, "Why do that—for what and for whom?" That can be one of our ejaculatory prayers, one of our questions. If you wake up, then it's, "For what and for whom? What am I doing just now?"

Prayer and contemplation don't stop in the monastery or Zen center. If taught and practiced sincerely, they're totally portable. As a visiting hospice nurse, I'm exposed to endless opportunities to wake up to life situations, to incorporate meditation into my nursing practice. Many of the patients I work with personify what goes on with all of us. We get despondent, we feel like giving up, we can be self-destructive.

Many of my patients have a history of severe drug abuse. Shoving heroin up your veins is overtly self-destructive. Sometimes it's very challenging to be present and supportive with someone who has been eroding the field that the mustard seed needs to settle in.

But I realize that there are also more subtle forms of self-destruction that we all fall prey to. Perhaps sleeping—not being truly present—when praying or meditating is just a more subtle form of the heroin addict's actions. We have this wonderful opportunity, we've set time aside in our lives, and we're not staying awake to ask, "What is it within me that can save me?" It's very interesting how we can get right to the edge of liberation

and then not stay awake.

Two other quotes from Jesus are very striking considered together: “Whoever has come to know the world has discovered the body, and whoever has discovered the body is worth more than the world ... Seek a place of rest for yourselves, that you may not become a carcass and be eaten.” The carcass represents attachment to food, sex, sleep, fame, and wealth—worldliness. So one who has become a carcass is one who has a perverted knowledge of the world. A Zen Master might say, “How long have you been carrying around that corpse?,” or, “You’re just a rice bag!” A rice bag is a heavy, hard-to-handle object—so calling someone a rice bag means they have no direction, no vocation.

Each of us needs to find our vocation so we don’t become a carcass and get eaten. I can’t tell you the number of people I’ve watched die who felt like a carcass. Before they take their last breath they’ll say in a discouraged way, “What was this life all about?” It’s so sad. It’s possible to find good teachers and traditions that can help us to get in balance with our carcass, so that it becomes a vehicle for our vocation rather than the container of our greed, anxieties, and misconceptions.

But there’s no need to hold to that idea of “I am a carcass; I’m going to be eaten.” Jesus said that to wake us up. It’s a little warning: “Oh yeah, I know what it feels like to be stuck in my body, kowtowing to every desire that it has.” So just wake up.

Someone once asked Jesus, “When will the final rest for the dead take place, and when will the new world come?” People wanted to know that from the Buddha, too. They would ask, “What is Buddha? What is dharma? Show me the way!” We all think, this life is not so great, so when is it going to get better? Jesus answered, “What you look for has already come, but you do not know it.” The Buddha said it’s like a fish swimming in water and saying, “I’m thirsty.”

Sometimes it’s easier for someone else to see your Buddha-nature than it is for you. But the work begins with each of us. It’s in our center. We have to find our guts, our ability to be in balance with those five things: food, sex, sleep, fame, wealth. Dying without ever really knowing who we are can seem easier than finding out what we’re responsible for in this life.

Each of us has the ability to open to “what am I?,” whatever the situation. There are tremendous opportunities to learn, to get out of the safe zone and into the regions that are more difficult. What’s important is to be uncontrived, not to have an idea, but to open up each moment to what’s going on right now. We may need to prepare the soil, but we always have the mustard seed. Nobody is ever born without it.

Rhodes PSN is guiding dharma teacher of the Kwan Um School of Zen. □



The Abbey of Gethsemani in Kentucky

Living the Life of Charity

Brother Benjamin, OCSO

Once a young monk said to an old monk, “What is a monk?” The old monk answered him, “A monk is one who asks every day, ‘What is a monk?’”

The Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance is a branch of the Order of Cistercians, a monastic family of Roman Catholic monks and nuns which was founded in 1098 in France. In that year a small group of monks left the Benedictine Abbey of Molesme to build what they called simply the new monastery and to live quietly their monastic life. The Order has continued from that time until now with varying fortunes, and we now have houses of monks and nuns throughout the world. In the seventeenth century there was a further reform of our way of life which had its clearest expression at the Abbey of La Trappe in France; thus, our branch of the Cistercians came to be known popularly as the “Trappists.”

I have experienced Cistercian life as a unity of two opposites. The daily life of a monk or nun is highly scheduled, arranged in a series of moments of prayer, chanting, study, work, solitude, communal action, eating, and sleep. Within this schedule one moves gradually more and more freely, less and less tightly, more and more like a stream flowing, less and less obstructed by the pebbles on the bottom. Control and freedom. Discipline and liberty. At first, and even for some time, these can seem like two things. But are they really the same, or different?

What is it that one monk might say in a journal such as this to a readership which is generally Buddhist? I find

our traditions say one word very clearly: charity. Charity in its most classic root, *caritas*, the immediate and heart-felt going out to the other, the question “can I help?” There is no other purpose to our discipline, our training, our beliefs, our dialogue, our sitting, our meditations, our labors. There is no other root to the Gospel, and what other meaning is there to dharma? If the one next to you is cold, give him a coat. If she is thirsty, give some water. If you have nothing, what can you do? Find the answer to this question right away!

So why live in a monastery?

You have to live somewhere. I mean you have to do this thing called life in some concrete location every day, which is the location in which you find yourself. It is a great waste to begin thinking it needs to be done somewhere else. I may not have come to the monastery with this in mind at first, and I suspect the average man or woman who has set out in a Zen monastery may have his or her understanding jolted along the way, or for that matter every married man and woman as well, but right now and here I do find myself in a monastery and here I have this job to do.

There is, of course, a more metaphysical approach to our Cistercian monastic life. But it is a metaphysic that is also very grounded in everyday life, as is Zen monastic life as I understand it. A monastery is a microcosm. Living in a monastery for any extended period of time only intensifies this experience of the amazing “connect-

edness” of all of life. As I listen to others who come here on retreats, or friends who visit, I hear the same questions I ask myself. “Why am I here in this world?” “Why do we suffer as we do?” “Why am I (either loved or not loved, depending)?” And all of the usual interpersonal struggles of friends, acquaintances, spouses, and lovers, and the resulting confusions, pain, or joy. In the monastery we live these human questions within a very definite structure, one refined over centuries to blend work, prayer, and interaction with the Christian view of life and meaning.

This is not to say that it simply “works.” There is no magic to life, only life itself. Life in the monastery is only life and one makes it by getting up in the morning, making one’s way to the church to chant, to study, to work, to eat, to go to sleep.

I don’t think it would be of value to engage here in theology, except perhaps to say that, in my experience, to attempt to approach this style of life without a broad understanding which transcends the small self, the ego world, my opinions, desires, etc., is to ask for more confusion, suffering, and misunderstanding. Zen, in particular kong-an work, seems to lend itself very well to our monastic life. How? It requires doing it to know that. But I believe that living in a correct understanding, able to function correctly in each situation, is to participate fully in this moment in the living person of Christ.

Brother Benjamin lives at the Abbey of Gethsemani, a renowned Trappist monastery. □

Sitting

*A dampened zendo, poorly lit,
Long silence, the chugpi’s hollow hit;
This fine eve ’fore Kyol Che’s end,
The oldest nun returns to sit.*

*Outside the sounds of insects blend
To fill the darkness they attend;
The sitting woman doesn’t hear,
But feels their presence like a friend.*

*With gentle breath and heart sincere
She long outlasts the candle there;
Till suddenly in early morn,
The strangest sound through frigid air.*

*A floor board creaked with voice forlorn,
Just at the place where it was worn.
In recognition, mind was torn;
And something died, but what was born?*

Bob Powers

Do the Birds Still Sing?

*Do the birds still sing in China,
And do whiskered fish still play;
Do blue brooks still touch the willows,
That cascade along their way?*

*Do the hills still hide the morning,
Till each mossy crag lets go;
And the dew burns straight like incense,
From the ricelands’ gentle flow?*

*Do the cities fill with faces,
Each one bent, intent to run;
And do markets hum with business,
Smells of spices in the sun?*

*Do the young still talk of freedom,
And their songs still fill the air;
Do they meet and plan their future,
In Tiananmen Square?*

Bob Powers

Contemplative Living: A Compass(ion)

Marilyn King, SM

Sentient beings are numberless. I vow to save them all.

—*Morning prayer of a bodhisattva.*

These words of the Zen teacher have been serving as a kind of koan from the time I heard them in my concluding interview. He had asked me why I came for the retreat; why did I choose to “sit” in silence for eight hours a day; why would I enter into the discipline of pain of doing nothing? As he spoke I was mentally adding other questions: What is a Sister of Mercy doing by just sitting? How can I set aside so much time for myself when there are so many needs in our world, not to speak of the incomplete projects on my desk at home? Remembrances of my novitiate training replayed tapes about how a Sister of Mercy does not spend too much time “with her sleeves on” but “pins up her skirts” and tends to the needs of others. There I sat before the teacher, struggling again with the elusive balance of duties of Mary and Martha.

Contemplation is compassion

Our interview continued. Why do I engage in prayer? There were some obvious practical explanations I could give for types of prayer such as intercessory prayer, scripture-based prayer, liturgical prayer, guided imagery, chant, and the like. But the prayer of just sitting? In reply to the teacher, I explained that I have been drawn to a quiet type of prayer for many years because I sense it is a way to a direct experience of deepest reality and with this comes enlightenment and with enlightenment comes wholeness and with wholeness comes fulfillment of God’s design. The teacher nodded in agreement, but led me a step further. He recounted how most who come to him to learn the art of Zen come seeking happiness, the end of their suffering, the liberating experience of knowing truth. That is, they come for themselves. But the only way that they will continue in the practice of Zen is to take a second step, and that is to sit for others, to be with others, all others, in utter simplicity. The reason for Zen sitting is compassion.

“How is this?” I asked. “I can understand being compassionate in my attitude towards others, and in my service to others in need, and in my prayers for others. But how is the prayer of no-mind, what I call contemplative prayer, compassion?” He responded with an example. “Let us say that you began your practice of Zen today with a sadness coming from something that is going on now in your life. In your sitting that sadness fills your mind and body. It makes ‘clear mind’ impossible. How are you going to let go of that sadness and just sit? Simply pay attention to it.

Be with the sadness that is the only reality here and now. Don’t analyze it or go back to its supposed cause or circumstances. Simply realize the sadness that is there right before you. It is all you have; it is all you are. That sadness is the sadness of the whole world. Breathe it in, breathe it out. In this single-mindedness you will find the healing of sadness, yours and the whole world’s.”

The teacher continued. “We make this vow each morning: ‘Sentient beings are numberless. We vow to save them all.’ How is this possible? Certainly not by individual acts, but by sitting. In this practice one gets to the root of all that is, moment by moment. When one puts aside the measuring mind, all falls away but one thing: compassion. Everything is one: your suffering and my suffering, your need and my need, your song and my song. All divisions are relativized. All becomes one and the salvation of all is realized for that moment. This is our vowed life.”

I left the interview astonished. I had just heard one of the most profound teachings about the purpose and meaning of my life as a Sister of Mercy.

Later on during my retreat, I asked the teacher how Zen could stop the war in the Persian Gulf, which for me was a global example of the disunities within each of us. Can just sitting bring world peace? Can prayer be a work of mercy?

He answered: “Both Saddam Hussein and President Bush want Kuwait. This is a dilemma. Shall it be given to the one or the other, or perhaps cut in two, as Solomon proposed to do with the baby presented to him? What do you think should be done?” He waited for me to answer.

I came up with solutions that dealt with political action to be taken to change our foreign policy, by which we think we are the police of the world, or to advocate an economic policy which would free us from reliance on imported oil. I spoke of making a choice myself of simplifying my own lifestyle in the belief that it is the consumerism of the U.S. which is at the root of our action in the Gulf. He just shook his head and said, “You are treating the symptoms. This is what you can do. Drink a cup of tea with a friend.” The interview ended with that.

I am still trying to comprehend the full meaning of his words (a foolish thing to do with Zen teaching!). But they reminded me so much of Catherine’s commendation to make sure that the Sisters all had a comfortable cup of tea when she was gone. Just be with. Do mercy by paying attention to your breathing, by being with a friend, by drinking a cup of tea, “and no exterior action should separate us from Him.” The center of the compass is compassion.

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The Elephant in the Room

Brenda Everson

In social work school, one hears a lot about the so-called “elephant in the room”—that obvious, giant, looming creature consisting of a particular issue (or idea, behavior, etc.) which the client has brought into a session. The therapist may utilize a number of clever techniques to get at the heart of what they believe to be *really* bothering the client—thus avoiding the elephant.

My Christian practice was often like that elephant. I attempted to go around the reality rather than through it. But I found I could not practice Buddhism and deny my Christian roots any more than a therapist could deny what was really taking place in a session.

Acknowledging my Christian roots while practicing Buddhism is not simply a nice thing to do along the spiritual journey, like that finger forever pointing to the moon. For me, it *is* the moon. Acknowledgement of my Christian roots is part of the practice itself. It is a living, breathing element.

So many times in our culture we try something new, not because it is inherently appealing to us, but because we are catapulted out of our dislike for something else. We try a new brand of this or that, whatever suits our surface needs at the moment. It is sometimes no different with our practice direction. We often make “like” and “dislike” under the guise of “spiritual growth.” This is the way my Zen practice began.

Christianity (Catholicism in particular) carries with it a reputation for being highly word-oriented. This is unfortunate because non-verbal contemplation, which over the centuries became an almost exclusively monastic practice, is what lies at the heart of the Christian tradition.

Nurturing the contemplative-at-heart in me, formal Zen practice (as well as Zen-as-everyday-practice) has worked quite well for me for some time. My need for a consistent method and outlet for contemplation with other lay people had found a home. And my “Christian karma” came tailing along, bringing up some key questions for me: How best could I now practice, given that I felt a direction to practice both Christianity and Buddhism? Most importantly, how best could I help others? How best could I love?

This “Christian karma” can best be described as the need to practice Christianity formally. It is not enough to say, “I am a Christian,” if I do not have a direction with

the tradition or the practice. It was within this spirit that I returned to utilizing three techniques for practice: working with a spiritual director, the use of a Christian mantra, and daily readings of the monastic psalter.

The purpose of a spiritual director in the Christian tradition is much the same as that of a teacher in our own Zen tradition. It is someone who can provide “hits” when needed, as well as listen in a non-judging way to what is surfacing in the student’s spiritual life. He or she can also serve as a human bridge between Christianity and other spiritual traditions. I chose a director who is a Catholic priest, and has also practiced Zen.

I find using the Jesus Prayer as a mantra and the recitation of psalms very useful tools. The Jesus Prayer (“Lord Jesus Christ, son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner”) can be broken into two parts during sitting. On the inhalation, I say “Lord Jesus Christ, son of God ...” and on the exhalation, I say “...have mercy on me, a sinner.” I also say this mantra when using beads.

While some in the Eastern tradition (as well as some of us in the West!) have trouble with the word “sinner,” I turn to its literal translation of “to miss the mark” to aid me in understanding. To miss the mark means keeping myself veiled in ignorance of my true nature. Zen Master Seung Sahn has remarked that to be born is “already a mistake.” I equate that with what one might call “original sin.” The Jesus Prayer, then, becomes a powerful mantra to help unveil the ignorance of the self.

The recitation of psalms in the daily monastic psalter is similar to the chanting one might do in a Zen center. Both have more to do with the power of the present moment and allowing clear perception to exist than with the meaning of the specific words.

These techniques have the same intention as bowing, sitting, and chanting. They are all formal ways in which the in-dwelling God can be recognized, in which Buddhahood can be realized. The solutions to the questions I posed earlier were not to be found in resisting one path and putting the other on a pedestal. Nor were they to be found in attempting some dramatic reconciliation of the two. Original nature can be perceived without diminishing the unique treasures that are inherent in both Buddhism and Christianity.

With the elephant in the room now overt, the tools needed to simply practice are more clear. When I am at liturgy, I am just at liturgy. When I am in the dharma room, I am just in the dharma room. That is the way to just practice, to just help others, to just love.

Brenda Everson is a licensed social worker and a graduate student at Boston University School of Social Work. She lives at the Cambridge Zen Center, where she is housemaster. □

Second Woman Certified as Ji Do Poep Sa Nim

On December 7, 1991, Jane McLaughlin became the eleventh Ji Do Poep Sa Nim (senior teacher) in the American sangha. She was the second woman to be so certified. McLaughlin PSN has lived in Zen centers in Los Angeles, Providence, and Cambridge, and participated in several long retreats here and in Korea. She currently directs the AIDS Care Project Acupuncture Clinic in Boston. This fall she will move to Europe, where she will be teaching at Kwan Um School of Zen centers. The talk and dharma combat that follow are excerpted from her certification ceremony at Providence Zen Center.

Address to the Assembly

Jane McLaughlin, JDPSN

(HITs the podium with the Zen stick.)

Mountain is blue, moonlight is shining.

(HIT)

Mountain never said, "I am blue." Moonlight never said, "I am shining."

(HIT)

Which one is true?

If you say "true," you can never find the truth.

Why?

KATZ!

The blue mountain is complete stillness.

Moonlight shining everywhere.

Thank you all for coming this evening. Even though it's a very happy occasion, I was a little nervous before the ceremony. Then I remembered a story about how Mu Sang Sunim once kept a clear mind in a potentially nerve-racking situation. This story reminded me to return to "don't know mind," so if you're ever in an emergency, you can use it too. Don't know mind gives us a clear mind in any kind of situation, even the most difficult.

Maybe some of you remember the summer of 1982, when Zen Master Seung Sahn was doing a lot of special energy practice. In addition to doing a thousand bows every day, he was trying all sorts of techniques which we had never seen before. Sometimes we even heard shouts coming from his room between midnight and two a.m.!

Once during this period of special energy practicing, Zen Master Seung Sahn was traveling on an airplane with Diana Lynch and Mu Sang Sunim. En route, Zen Master Seung Sahn perceived that the pilot was thinking about his girlfriend instead of paying attention to flying the

plane. So, he said to Diana and Mu Sang Sunim, "This pilot's mind is not clear. I must wake him up!" The next thing they knew, he flipped down the tray on the chair in front of him, and began banging on it while chanting at the top of his lungs, "Kwan Seum Bosal, Kwan Seum Bosal ... !" (the mantra for the bodhisattva of compassion) The other passengers became visibly confused and upset. Within seconds, two or three flight attendants came over to say "Sir, calm down, please, you are disturbing the passengers. Can I get you a drink?" But Zen Master Seung Sahn only chanted louder, "Kwan Seum Bosal, Kwan Seum Bosal ..."

Mu Sang Sunim thought to himself, "What shall I do?"

The Zen Master is causing a scene!"

He looked at Diana, who had already decided her best response would be to keep reading her magazine. As he was contemplating what to do, he remembered Zen Master Seung Sahn telling him once, "Your computer is number one high class. Sometimes a high class computer is not so good. Too much thinking. Anytime you have a question, ask the question up here (points to head), but don't listen to any answers that come from up there. Only use the answers from your don't know center, down here (points to belly)." In the midst of all the commotion—his teacher shouting and banging on the tray, the flight attendants rushing around, the passengers craning their necks to see what was going on—Mu Sang Sunim decided to try this advice. He asked his computer: "What should I do?" Instantly, an answer appeared from his don't know center.

"Eat a banana!" He thought, "That's odd. Maybe I'd better try again." So again he asked, "What shall I do?" Again the answer came: "Eat a banana!" So, he reached into his bag, pulled out a banana, and ate it. He felt much better.

In this situation, everyone was just doing their job: Zen



Jane McLaughlin, Ji Do Poep Sa Nim

Master Seung Sahn chanted to wake up the pilot, Diana continued reading not to add to the commotion, and Mu Sang Sunim only followed his teacher's advice. As he was disembarking, Zen Master Seung Sahn apologized profusely for the disturbance. "I am sorry for the trouble I caused you" he said, bowing to the flight attendant.

That's Zen. Each moment is complete. But everything is also always changing—one moment banging and shouting, the next moment apologizing—not attached to either one. Use your karma, whatever it is, to help others. Zen Master Seung Sahn's teaching is always the same. He always talks about direction, never technique. Never once, in all of these years, has he shown me a meditation technique. Only "don't know!" And only direction: why do we do what we do?

My first formal interview with Zen Master Seung Sahn was in 1983 on the first day of Winter Kyol Che, a ninety day retreat. He began by saying, "Good morning! Do you have a question?"

"No, I have no question."

"Then I have a question for you! Why do you come and sit ninety days of Kyol Che?"

"Because I want to!"

He burst out laughing. "That's number one bad reason, okay? Now you ask me!"

"Okay. Why do you sit ninety days of Kyol Che?"

"For you."

That was a very striking answer. The next morning he asked again, "Why do you come and sit ninety days of Kyol Che?"

"For you," I replied, in a somewhat tenuous manner.

"Correct!! That's wonderful!"

After I left the room, though, I realized that I wasn't so noble as that. The truth of the matter was, I hadn't come with the desire to practice for others. I only wanted to understand my true self.

Over the course of the next ninety days everyone practiced very sincerely. Because our thinking wasn't so constant and ever-present, often we all had the exact same mind: when breakfast was served, we were all happy. When it rained, we all got wet. That was it. Nothing more than that. On the last morning of the retreat, Zen Master Seung Sahn came back to give interviews. I thought to myself, "He knows we've been sitting here for ninety days—I bet he's going to ask a very difficult question." I bowed and sat down.

"Good morning! Do you have any questions?"

"No."

"Then I have a question for you. Why did you sit ninety days of Kyol Che?"

"For you."

He smiled and said, "Thank you very much."

As we practice, this "for you" mind slowly becomes ours. It is the beginning and the end of the teaching. We

can spend our whole life growing into it, finding the million ways there are of practicing it. Sometimes we fail. Failing gives us inspiration to keep trying. First it's Buddha's idea, or a Zen Master's idea, but when you practice don't know mind, there is no thinking. When there is no thinking, there is no separation between "me" and "you." The real wonder of Zen practice is that we can experience this ourselves. That's the meaning of "inside and outside become one."

This "for you" teaching is not dependent on Zen or any other form. There is no prescribed "package" in which to find it. If we can take away "I" even for a moment, then we are already in harmony with the universe.

What a wonderful evening! Thank you all for your support, and for practicing together. And thank you, Zen Master Seung Sahn, for your teaching.

(HIT)

Jesus said, "The way is wide, the gate is narrow."

(HIT)

Buddhism says, "The Great Way has no gate."

(HIT)

Taoism says, "The Great Way cannot be perceived."

Which one is correct?

KATZ!

Out the door, through the gate, into the evening wind.

Thank you.

Dharma Combat

Q: As I was driving here today, I was listening to a song on the radio. It said "I've been gone around and around but where do I find my soul?" So I ask you, where do I find my soul?

JM: What are you doing now?

Q: Sitting here talking to you.

JM: Then you've already found your soul.

Q: Thank you for your teaching.

Q: Is Kwan Seum Bosal (*the bodhisattva of compassion*) male or female?

JM: You already understand.

Q: No, I don't.

JM: How may I help you?

Q: Thank you for your teaching.

Q: When I told Zen Master Seung Sahn that I practiced Sufism, he said "Better than doing nothing." When I told my Sufi master I practiced Zen he said "It's not complete, only Sufism is complete." I'm confused, help me!

JM: What are you doing right now?

Q: Talking to you.

JM: Is that Sufism or Zen?

Q: (*pause*) Thank you for your teaching. □

Gathering Flowers in a Circle

Tom Campbell

Last summer, my wife and I cared for my mother as she died in our home. I want to share this experience, as it continues to be a very powerful teacher for my Zen practice.

My relationship with my mother was frequently turbulent, especially after my father died. I struggled to sort out what I could give my mother, how much responsibility I should take, and what I could give to her when her neediness and alcoholism took over. Zen Master Seung Sahn, in an interview, told me to just give your parents what they need. That is our primary responsibility to our parents. Strong advice, but difficult for me to fully understand.

My mother had never been a deeply spiritual person, so when we discovered that she had advanced throat cancer, I had no expectations of how she would die or how much strength she had to cope with the great questions of life and death. Fifty years of smoking and drinking had not left an insightful mind, but she retained the warmth and deepest caring that comes from being a mother, even when masked by fear and loneliness.

Over the year and a half that we struggled together with treatments, I realized that she probably would not reach any real acceptance or reconciliation with death. Each treatment only served to provide a small hope to carry her through to the next traumatic event. In the last month, when she left the hospital for the final time, she began to lose verbal communication. Moments of clarity were increasingly small, as we began to increase her doses of morphine.

We began to juggle professional in-home care with care from our family, which seemed to increase her disorientation. She began to struggle and resent all the changes. Finally we decided that she needed full 24-hour care by her family. Since my wife, Stephanie, has been a hospice nurse, we brought my mother into our home.

One day, I was sitting with her on her bed. She had just awakened from a long afternoon nap. Her first words were, "What is real?" I gave her a big, long hug. Then she said, "What is truth?" I said, "I love you." And then she disappeared again. "What was this?" I said to myself. Here I've hardly ever had a spiritual conversation with my mother and now I'm in interview with her. I was stunned and moved.

A few days later, she asked me again, "What is real?" And I said, "I don't know Mom, what is real?" She said, "You and me." Now, I didn't answer, "You already understand," but she did understand and she gave me the most wonderful, heartfelt answer I could ever experience. She immediately cut through all the barriers and questions

in our relationship. There was no separation, no thinking, just us.

In her last days, deep suffering came up. Death is so intensely revealing and intimate. She did not want to wear clothes. We had to do everything for her, wash and clean her. One night she struggled constantly, with incredible strength, trying to get up, writhing and hitting the bed. We could not help her. Higher doses of morphine did not help. We finally realized that she just had to struggle until she could not move anymore. All we could do was to be there and protect her.

Katagiri Roshi, in a dharma talk just before his death, spoke clearly about suffering together when one dies. In death, he said, "You should really understand deep human pain and suffering ... when a person is facing his or her last moment, then you can really share your life and death with him or her."

I am still realizing how much my mother's struggle is my struggle, where this suffering comes from, and how we suffer together. Finally, the lesson of Zen Master Seung Sahn became clear. Just fully being present is our correct situation, function, and relationship. One of the hospice nurses that visited us told me how one of her patients had said, "Once I knew I was going to die, I thought all I had to do was let go. But I realized I had to have patience to die."

So there it is. Continuing until the end. Learning about suffering and pain. Understanding its subtle and vast influences in each moment is what Zen practice helps clarify. The clarification of life and death is our most important lesson. We are not learning about death in order to transcend it, but to see its depth and impermanence.

The energy in our home before she died was positively electric. It was like the energy you get from strong sitting periods. Our family had all gathered. We did not see her last breath—she took it alone. But we were in the room as she passed away and I felt her heart slowly begin to recede into complete peace. After she died, there was absolute emptiness and stillness in the house. The breath and the heart. Energy and stillness. Struggle and release. These are the constant companions in our Zen practice.

After a ceremony at the Seattle Dharma Center, my brother, sister, and I combined my mother's ashes with those of my father and scattered them with flowers off an island in Puget Sound. As we sat and watched, an eddy gathered all the flowers into a circle, precisely where the ashes had disappeared into the deep blue.

Tom Campbell is a dharma teacher and abbot of the Seattle Dharma Center, which is located in the home of Tom and his wife, Stephanie Sarantos. □

Group Practice: Two Personal Perspectives

Caring for the Fragile Shoot of Lay Practice ...

Ellen Sidor

Ellen Sidor, a senior dharma teacher, established The Meditation Place in Providence in 1985, and is moving out of Rhode Island this summer. Here she shares some reflections on her many years of lay practice.

Lay practice, when it begins in an individual, is like a fragile shoot breaking through hard ground: while it has a lot of vital energy and direction, it can be easily bruised or trampled. There are important conditions we need to establish in our personal greenhouse in order to nurture this tiny green shoot. Once it has grown into a young sapling, it is a lot tougher and will stand a fair amount of neglect or abuse. But at the beginning, we must take care. If we are too harsh, we will wilt it. If we are too lazy to nurture it, it won't grow.

Simplifying Your Life

When we talk about lay practice, we are not talking about being monks or clergy. We are talking about living as householders in the ordinary world: going to school, earning a living, being primarily concerned with family, friends, home, and career. Lay life usually means taking care of lots of material things: living space, clothing, means of transportation, food, recreational equipment. That is one of the primary differences between monastic and lay life: lots of personal possessions.

Monastic vows usually include poverty, celibacy and obedience. For householders, there is no such set of vows. We find ourselves saddled with a complexity of possessions, without clear guidelines as to the correct relationship. In this glitzy American culture, it is very easy to go astray. The media shouts, "Buy! Buy! Buy!"—as if it were true what the ironic bumper sticker says, "He who has the most possessions when he dies, wins."

But some of us feel at least slightly sick or guilty about having lots of possessions, and this is healthy. There is something we can easily do about possessions: have less of them. Give away or sell what you don't need, and don't add to the pile you already have.

Simplicity and unclutteredness is one of the reasons why we feel calmer when we enter churches or temples. There may be a myriad of objects in these spaces, but they are harmonious with each other. Our home spaces are

often cluttered. Objects pile upon objects, gathering dust because there are too many things to which we must attend. Visual clutter is very distracting to the mind. What you must have, keep neatly.

A Sacred Space

The "de-sacralization" of our planet is one of the saddest developments of the modern world, because it means we no longer treat it with reverence, we just regard it as a trash barrel. But we can "re-sacralize" our lives, and this is important work. What makes a space sacred, and why do we need it? A sacred space is a space which we treat with respect. It is an outer manifestation of the inner peace and order we hunger for. It sends signals to our nervous system to relax, it prepares and encourages us to practice.

A sacred space can be inside of our home, or outside. Where we do our regular practice should be clean and simple—a bare expanse of wall in our apartment which we face when we sit on our cushion. It can be a small altar on a bookshelf where we light incense or a candle. It can be much more elaborate. But our practice will become more easily habitual if it is done in the same space, and a space which will become loved. I've had a dharma room in my apartment for seven years, and it has become the jewel of the house. It draws me in and refreshes me. It has become a sacred space for me and others.

Even with such a space in your home, you will still benefit from regular visits to churches or temples or the great outdoors. Sacred spaces have an unusual energy for us; they make us feel better, more empowered. They inspire our awe. They show us that other human beings also practice and have practiced for thousands of years. When you are struggling alone, it is good to be reminded of this.

The outdoors is an especially wonderful place to practice. Mountains and seas, deserts and forests are all sacred spaces. Here the unity surrounds us, unmistakable, overpowering. Just sit down quietly and listen. Breathe deeply. Feel the joy of being part of the myriad things that are present. If you can, go outdoors for an extended sitting alone. Even a single afternoon can change your whole attitude toward your practice.

Discipline and Flexibility

Householders are always having unexpected things come up. You have to keep a lot of things in balance that sometimes conflict. Sometimes you need to take time off from your practice schedule. Other times it's good to

maintain that discipline. If you don't want to sit because you don't want to face yourself without distraction, you definitely need to start giving yourself some other quality time alone: to stretch or read or write in a journal. Keep your sitting time for sitting.

Try to sit every day, even if it's only five or ten minutes. If ten minutes of sitting drives you crazy, do some physical exercise before you sit, or fifteen minutes of yoga, or take a walk, then sit. People vary a lot in the jumpiness of their minds and their ability to focus, even within a day. Many of us are not used to trying to calm our minds, so even a few minutes of quiet sitting can seem like torture. The night before I went on my first three-day Zen retreat, I dreamt I was driving into a large trash compactor and was going to be completely squashed! Fears like this are not uncommon.

When should you practice? Look at your daily schedule. When are your quiet moments? Trying to cram your sitting into a frazzled schedule doesn't work. If you resent your practice, you will soon drop it. Don't turn practice into a bludgeon or a jail. If you cannot find it somewhat rewarding, perhaps you should do something else.

I discovered a few years ago that I was using the energy and calm I got from daily sitting to support an even *more* cluttered schedule. That won't work for long either. If you start to resent your practice as an intrusion into your schedule, you are too busy. See where you can cut back. Find a quiet time, or make one. Practice should be something refreshing like deep breathing, not just another chore you add to a busy life.

Finding Your Own Rhythm

In this busy culture of ours, we need to listen to the voice of sanity within us, which may have gotten drowned out by louder voices. We need to learn our own rhythm. Our practice may start with a schedule given to us by others, but the practice that stays with us is the one that keeps us in balance. This is also true of forms and rituals. They are supports for practice. We may need at first to keep them quite strictly, but learn when to put them aside.

Don't be afraid to experiment. Making mistakes in practice can be very useful. This is *your* practice—it will not work unless it truly fits your life. When you are a monk, you follow the rules and schedules of your order. As a lay person, you must create your own order. But you don't have to do it alone; you don't have to reinvent it.

Sharing Zen practice over the years has been immensely rewarding for me. Zen is such a portable practice, you can take it anywhere with no special equipment needed. It can refresh anyone's spiritual life, regardless of their background. Just bring along your own life (as if you could do otherwise!) and plunge in. I heartily recommend it. □



... Without Burning Out

Anne Rudloe

In setting up a local group, the most important issue is not the mailing list or where you meet or providing a newsletter. Neither is it whether you pay for a classified ad to advertise a talk, or how to get public service announcements on your events in the local media, or whether to have childcare, or even how much to charge and who cooks if you have a retreat (although all of these are important).

The most important thing is the direction of your practice—can you be there week after week even on the weeks when only two or three people show up? When no one shows up? When you really don't feel like being there? When you've decided you're not really qualified?

Also: Can you handle the time involved without big hassles from spouses, significant others and children who may think you're shortchanging your family? Can you deal with these hassles when they happen after all? Can you provide sound basic teaching and be willing to acknowledge what you don't know? Then how will you feel when somebody who's practiced for a while and seems to be committed suddenly claims you're an egotist-

tical self-centered fraud on a power trip and stomps off for good?

No matter what happens (it will), are you willing to try? Then there are no other criteria.

Keeping a local group going is just giving, being there for whomever comes in the door—giving your time and energy to help them deal with their situation. That's all it is—giving, not receiving, just trying to help someone who's probably in pain and hurting in some private way. And maybe sometimes you do start to feel a bit pleased with yourself; maybe the person who got mad at you wasn't 100% off base. Can you see this if it happens and then work on letting it dissolve? When someone comes in hoping for help, it's obscene to turn the helping into some sort of private ego gratification.

Most of the people for whom you make this effort will come once or a few times and they won't be back no

matter how hard you try. Or they'll be very enthusiastic for a while and then quit altogether. If your energy is a function of how big the group is each week, sooner or later it will be a problem. Spiritual practice involves giving without being concerned about what you get back. Setting up a group especially involves giving without asking what do I get back—are you comfortable with that yet?

Find a level of effort that you can maintain over the long haul. Don't make it too easy, but don't decide it's up to you personally to save the world and then get burned out and quit altogether on days when it doesn't seem to happen. Saving all sentient beings is a remarkable process, after all—don't forget to enjoy it.

Anne Rudloe has been a member of the Cypress Tree Zen Center in Tallahassee, Florida for many years. She has served in various capacities, including director. □

Welcome Relief

Cool night trail
flashlight eye wandering
(rattlesnake feeler)
Low growl somewhere
flushes fear bubbles
from the gut
coming to a chill burst
in my forehead

Awakened from the nightmare
of seeming tough

Jan Sendzimir
Kitkitdizze
foothills of the Sierra Nevada

just that

behind the plop/croaking of bull frogs,
the cycling cadences of summer birds,
the highway's gray roar
is more present at dusk
than dark early morning.

the sharp crescendo of a car
in the passing lane
causes hands and feet to tense.

Paul Bloom

"life is chopping wood"

life is chopping wood/
hauling water,
some such—old zen master—
remember, running the bowen field track
on a bright january
sunday afternoon,
home in time for millie's potluck
and relax before the speed of monday work,
thinking of
february hiking,
this morning's bright meditation room,
brunch and errands,
feel last thursday's
dark track
fifteen degree run
before a late dinner
while july was seventy-five
high school kids
working out
in the summerschool track program,
runners all over the field
heavy with heat of summer energy,
just now
the pleasant loneliness
of cold january sundays
texture of wood and water cycles.

Paul Bloom

Songgwang-sa Temple

Mu Soeng Sunim

Second in an occasional series on noteworthy Korean temples.

Songgwang-sa (“Vast Pines Monastery”) is one of the three treasure temples of Korea — the sangha treasure — (the others are Haein-sa, the dharma treasure, and Tongdo-sa, the Buddha treasure). It is so called because it has been the premier Zen temple in Korea for the last eight hundred years, and because of the number of eminent monks it has produced. From 1210 to 1428, sixteen successive resident teachers at Songgwang-sa were given the title of National Teacher by Korean kings, attesting to the unique teaching lineage established by Bojo Chinul (1157-1210). Like most Korean temples, Songgwang-sa is located amidst the magnificent scenery of the Chogye Mountains in the south-central part of what is now South Korea.

Songgwang-sa was established as a small temple in 770, and called Kilsang-sa. At that time, the temple was associated with the Hwaom (Avatamsaka) sect, the predominant doctrinal school of Korean Buddhism. In 1197, Bojo Chinul moved his “prajna and samadhi” (wisdom and meditation) community there and brought it to prominence.

Bojo Chinul is known to us today as the founder of the native tradition of Zen in Korea. He was born at a time when Buddhism under the Koryo dynasty (969-1392) had become corpulent and corrupt. When Chinul went to the capital city of Kaesong as a young monk to take his monk’s examination, he found his colleagues to be interested only in the pursuit of fame and power. Disgusted, he circulated a manifesto proposing a community designed to foster constant training in samadhi and prajna. Ten of Chinul’s fellow monks signed the compact, but it took many long years for the community to take shape.

The first forming took place at a small temple called Kojo-sa, but the needs of the community soon outgrew the small temple. They found the remains of Kilsang-sa temple on Songgwang-mountain. Although the area of the temple was not big enough, the site was outstanding and the land fertile; the springs were sweet and the forests abundant. It was truly a place which would be appropriate for the community’s goals of cultivating the mind, nourishing self-nature, gathering an assembly, and making merit.

In the spring of 1197, the community moved to the new site and work began on restoration. Later, Kilsang-sa was renamed Songgwang-sa after the mountain on which it was located. Chinul’s pioneering efforts at Songgwang-sa were directed towards an integrated,



complementary approach to the study of Zen and sutras, thus taking the edge off centuries of rivalry between these two approaches to understanding Buddha’s teachings. In 1205, King Uijong ordered a change in the name of the mountain from Songgwang-san to Chogye-san, Chogye Mountain being the site in south China where Hui-neng, the sixth patriarch, had his temple.

After Chinul’s death in 1210, his successor Hyeshim (1178-1234) became the leader of the community, and under his leadership, Songgwang-sa blossomed even more into a center for the cultivation of samadhi and prajna. Hyeshim compiled more than 1700 kong-ans into one single volume, a seminal work which continues to be integral to the practice of Zen in Korea. Chinul and Hyeshim provided a dynamic and authentic leadership not only for Songgwang-sa but for Korean Zen in general.

The present temple of Songgwang-sa has undergone six major reconstructions in its history. The latest reconstruction was completed just prior to the Seoul Olympics in 1988, and turned the main Buddha hall into a huge and magnificent room. This latest phase of reconstruction repaired the damage done to many buildings during the Korean War, when more than half were destroyed by fire.

In this century, Songgwang-sa reestablished a position as the premier Zen temple in Korea under the leadership of Zen Master Hyo Bong (1888-1966). In a religious culture where most of the monks came from farming families and could barely read and write, Hyo Bong stood out because he was a judge before donning monk’s robes. He became the archbishop of Korean Buddhism in 1958 and held this position until his death. His most famous disciple was Zen Master Ku San (1909-1983) who became the resident teacher at Songgwang-sa in 1967, and established the first facilities in the country for Western men and women to become monastics. Ku San’s students are now dispersed around the world, and have been instrumental in making Korean Zen known and available to their western audiences.

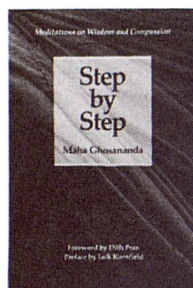
Mu Soeng Sunim is abbot of Diamond Hill Zen Monastery and executive director of the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies. □

Book Reviews

Step by Step: Meditations on Wisdom and Compassion

Maha Ghosananda
Parallax Press, 1992

Reviewed by Heila Downey



From the killing fields of Cambodia, steeped in the horror of death and destruction, appeared the venerable Maha Ghosananda—a ray of sunshine after the darkness of night, a light of hope for the suffering millions of Cambodia. Confronted with violence, he always saw an opportunity for reconciliation with the potential

for loving kindness. He calls this the law of opposites. Maha Ghosananda reminds us that national peace can only be achieved through personal peace, to which end he prays:

*Great compassion makes a peaceful heart.
A peaceful heart makes a peaceful person.
A peaceful person makes a peaceful family.
A peaceful family makes a peaceful community.
A peaceful community makes a peaceful nation.
A peaceful nation makes a peaceful world.*

Step by Step is a collection of talks and meditations on love, compassion, wisdom and peace, drawn from Maha Ghosananda's experience as a respected and loved peace-maker and meditation master, making it available to the global family.

Whether it be talking of letting go of suffering, universal love, or anger, his gentle words will touch the reader's inner being, evoking spontaneous feelings of great love and great compassion and a need to reach out and save all beings from suffering.

Throughout *Step by Step* Maha Ghosananda's essence of light, love, and courage of heart reaches us with his ever-gentle, ever-present smile.

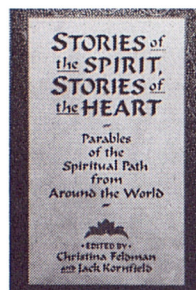
The editor's introduction details the more recent history of Cambodia and Maha Ghosananda's involvement in the peace process.

Step by Step is a treasure house of wisdom to be read and re-read.

Stories of the Spirit, Stories of the Heart

Christina Feldman & Jack Kornfield
Harper San Francisco, 1991

Reviewed by Ellen B. Gwynn



The authors have assembled a lovely collection of nearly two hundred tales, anecdotes, and poems from a variety of sources, including Buddhist (early, Zen, and Tibetan), Sufi, Christian, Hasid, and Hindu, as well as European and contemporary folktales. They range from a few sentences to five or ten pages, and many are wonderfully appropriate for reading to children.

The selections are divided into sixteen chapters, and the introductory text of each chapter is a teaching of some aspect of the Buddha-dharma. The stories demonstrate universal spiritual themes such as compassion, selflessness, suffering, and insight. In one of my favorites, a Sufi story, a man observed a tiger leave what was left over from its prey every day for a fox that had lost its legs. The man marvelled at this and decided to sit quietly and trust that God would similarly provide for him. Many days later, when he was near death from starvation, he heard a voice say, "Open your eyes! Follow the example of the tiger and stop imitating the disabled fox!"

The authors regrettably relied on male pronouns when referring to nearly all the animals and unidentified people in the stories. Otherwise, the prose is artful and vivid. This book is a pleasure to read, and many of the stories will lend themselves easily to dharma talks.

Longing for Darkness: Tara and the Black Madonna

China Galland
Viking-Penguin, 1991

Reviewed by Nancy Herington

When I saw the cover of this book, a shiver ran down my spine, a sensation I feel when I recognize a mystery and a truth. The green Tara and Our Lady of Czestochowa side by side on the book's cover ... of course!

This spiritual adventure/mystery opens in Kathmandu in 1980, where Galland has broken her leg in a fall during a Himalayan trek. As she waits in a hotel room, then in a hospital room, struggling with pain and illness, she reviews her life and the events that have brought her here. It is, unfortunately, a history that is distressingly familiar.

Raised in a strict Catholic family, married at nineteen, Galland found herself at age twenty-one a single mother of two children, unable to find work or child care, "dogged by a gnawing sense of failure." She left the church and spent the next seven years in a desperate round of partying, school, work and a chaotic family life. With a third child, another failed marriage, and a problem with drugs and alcohol, she attempted to return to Catholicism.

Then she began Zen practice at Green Gulch Farm, and it was there that she heard of Tara, a female Buddha in the Tibetan tradition. Tara vowed to be enlightened only in a woman's body, a vow she fulfilled. "I had to search for this woman who found that being a woman is good enough," Galland writes, and so she began a ten year journey that took her all over the world.

This is a book of connections complex and subtle, delicate and intriguing. Galland isn't trying to prove anything. She is following an instinct and a yearning for wholeness and harmony in her spiritual life.

This isn't a book that simply tries to integrate the Judeo-Christian tradition with Eastern mysticism. It explores far beyond that. Ishtar of the Hittites, the Egyptian Isis, Demeter of Greek mythology, a black Kali in India, the Black Madonna at Einsiedeln, a little brown Madonna in Texas: is there a connection? Galland talks to everyone to find out: the Dalai Lama, Lech Walesa, a Jungian analyst, a philologist who teaches Greek, Latin, and Tibetan, priests, nuns, and a fascinating assortment of fellow travelers.

This isn't a book about past wonders only. We learn that there is a little image of Tara growing out of the rock in Nepal, that the Virgin Mary is appearing in trees in Poland and to some young peasants in Yugoslavia. Galland does not merely record such incidents. She plunges in with heart and mind wide open, participating not as an impartial observer but as a believer.

There were some minor irritations in this book. Galland often made me think of Alexandre David-Neel, another intrepid explorer and seeker who endured sickness, injury, and danger in her spiritual quests. I nearly wrote "conquests," since they both seem so determined to get something that their travels occasionally take on the quality of a news hound on the scent of a good story. During her precious minutes in front of the Black Madonna of Czestochowa, Poland, Galland frantically snaps picture after picture, stopping only for a moment since she can't really see her while she is photographing. At Medjugorje, Yugoslavia, she is not so awed that she can't take a picture of two of the visionaries as they speak to the Virgin. And later, she badgers Marija, trying to pin down precisely what the Virgin meant. I have a feeling that, if Galland had been present for the Sermon on the Mount, she would have pestered Jesus all the way back to town

to define exactly what he meant by "poor in spirit."

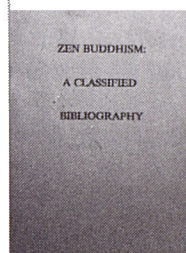
Overall, this is a book of marvels. Intensely personal, intellectually fascinating, full of poetry and recondite tidbits of knowledge, it inspires readers to explore their own traditions and imagery and to seek their own connections.

Zen Buddhism: A Classified Bibliography

James L. Gardner

Wings of Fire Press, Salt Lake City, 1991

Reviewed by Mu Soeng Sunim



Perhaps more than any other branch of Buddhism, Zen has entered American consciousness in unsuspecting ways. It started as an avant-garde fad in the fifties and suddenly, it seemed, everyone with any claim to artistic or intellectual sophistication was talking about Zen. In retrospect, it seems that Zen itself was little understood in those

days, but all the talk about "Zen" provided a climate of receptivity in which the next generation could find an anchor and inspiration. On the question of whether Zen is truly understood even today, the jury is still out. Nonetheless, over the last forty years an impressive body of information has become available both to beginning and advanced students, as well as to scholars and academics researching the background of Zen. Even though one can today walk into any bookstore in America and pick out a handful of books off the shelf on Zen, there has always been a need for a comprehensive bibliography. (There is a similar need for a bibliography that will cover Vipassana, Tibetan, Pure Land, and all other branches of Buddhism.) With his bibliography, James L. Gardner has rendered a real service to readers and scholars of Zen.

The bibliography is a massive work of compilation, containing nearly three thousand entries for books, journal articles, essays, dissertations and other material on Zen. Most of the works cited are in English, but publications in some twelve other Western languages are also mentioned. Publications and articles dealing with disciplines directly or peripherally influenced by Zen, such as architecture, tea ceremony, gardens, martial arts, Morita psychotherapy, humor, cooking, and others are extensively included.

The entries in the bibliography have been broken down in convenient chapters. Thus, under "Zen in Japan," we get listings for publications on the Soto, Rinzai

and Obaku sects; on the history of Zen in Japan; and the influence of Zen on Japanese culture. There are entries for Zen in China, Korea, Tibet, and Vietnam, as well as Zen in the West. The entries on Zen in the West are particularly valuable, since they include articles and publications not generally available in bookstores, and can provide much-needed reference material for a researcher. In a surprising interface of Western philosophy and Zen, we get a chapter on Heidegger and Zen, and it's a pleasant surprise to see the number of articles on this little known area of East and West coming together. Another pleasant surprise is the inclusion of entries on the Kyoto School of Zen, little known in the West but quite influential in the current philosophical developments in Japanese Zen.

One slight drawback of the bibliography may be that it is weighted heavily in favor of Japanese Zen. Thus we have extensive biographical entries on all the prominent monks and personalities in Japanese Zen, but very little on figures in Chinese or Korean Zen. But this may be less a fault of compilation than the simple fact that there are more publications about Japan in Western languages, or that more translations have been made from Japanese into Western languages. Hopefully as Western scholarship delves more deeply into the non-Japanese traditions of Zen, we will have more entries reflecting that.

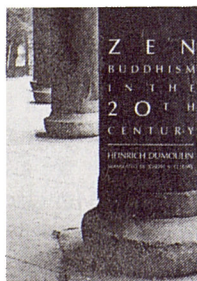
Anyone seriously involved with the past and future of Zen could not have asked for more in a bibliography. It is hoped that Mr. Gardner will continue to update his excellent bibliography periodically to include the latest research and publications in Zen-related topics.

Zen Buddhism in the 20th Century

Heinrich Dumoulin

Weatherhill, Inc., New York, 1992

Reviewed by Mu Soeng Sunim



Heinrich Dumoulin is the pre-eminent historian of Zen. It is no less than ironic that a Jesuit theologian should devote himself to producing some of the finest scholarship on the history of Zen. His new book is an important and authoritative narrative of the philosophical and religious developments in Japan in the twentieth century and how these developments have in turn affected the philosophical development of Zen in the West. In the present book he surveys leading twentieth-century Zen philosophers, starting with

an affectionate and insightful portrait of D.T. Suzuki both as a bridge-builder between East and West and as a philosopher of Zen in his own right. There is a group portrait of the Kyoto School of Zen and its leading lights such as Kitaro Nishida, Shin'ichi Hisamatsu and Keiji Nishitani. Little known in the West, the Kyoto School of Zen has been on the cutting edge of philosophical developments in Japan in this century, and Dumoulin's portrait of this school is possibly the first uncluttered account to reach a general audience in the West.

There's an informative essay on the discovery of Dogen as a thinker. Dumoulin captures the impact of Dogen's thought on developments in Zen in Japan in this century, something which D.T. Suzuki never did. (Probably the first generation of Western practitioners of Zen got a rather one-sided picture of Zen as a result of this omission.)

He also reviews the transformation of the historical picture of Zen achieved through modern research and translations, and he discusses the integration of Zen with psychology and Christianity, focusing on interpreting Zen enlightenment and building bridges of understanding between the traditions of East and West. The information on the Zen background of Morita therapy, now beginning to become known in the West, is quite interesting.

The title of the book is slightly misleading; it should more properly read "Zen Buddhism in 20th-Century Japan." Dumoulin, now in his eighties, has been a resident of Tokyo since 1935, and was a professor of philosophy and history at Sophia University from 1941 to 1976. Thus his preoccupation with Japanese Zen and his omission of developments in Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese Zen is understandable. But within the context of what Dumoulin knows best, it's an excellent and important book. □



Sigita Subotita '92

Glossary

- beads: a string of beads resembling a bracelet or necklace, used for counting bows or repetitions of a mantra in various sects of Buddhism.
- bodhisattva (*Sanskrit*): a being whose actions promote unity or harmony; one who vows to postpone one's own enlightenment in order to help all sentient beings realize liberation; one who seeks enlightenment not only for oneself but for others. The bodhisattva ideal is at the heart of Mahayana and Zen Buddhism.
- Buddha (*Sanskrit*): an awakened one; refers usually to Siddhartha Gautama (sixth century BC), historic founder of Buddhism.
- Buddha-nature: that which all sentient beings share and manifest through their particular form; according to Zen, the Buddha said that all things have Buddha-nature and therefore have the innate potential to become Buddha.
- Chogye order: the major order in Korean Buddhism, formed in 1356 AD by the unification of the Nine Mountains Schools of Zen.
- dharma (*Sanskrit*): the way or law; the path; basically, Buddhist teaching, but in a wider sense any teaching or truth.
- dharma room: in Zen Master Seung Sahn's centers, the meditation and ceremony hall.
- enlightenment: awakening.
- hara (*Japanese*): the vital energy center of the abdomen; in many Zen traditions it is considered to be the seat of the heart-body-mind. Focusing one's attention on the hara is a technique used in some forms of Zen practice for centering and developing samadhi power.
- HIT: the sound of a palm or stick hitting a table or floor; used to cut off discriminative thinking.
- inka (*Korean*): "public seal"; certification of a student's completion of, or breakthrough in, kong-an practice.
- interview: a formal, private meeting between a Zen teacher and a student in which kong-ans are used to test and stimulate the student's practice; may also occasion informal questions and instruction.
- Ji Do Poep Sa Nim (JDPSN) (*Korean*): "dharma master"; a student who has been authorized by Zen Master Seung Sahn to teach kong-an practice and lead retreats.
- karma (*Sanskrit*): "cause and effect," and the continuing process of action and reaction, accounting for the interpenetration of all phenomena. Thus our present thoughts, actions, and situations are the result of what we have done in the past, and our future thoughts, actions, and situations will be the product of what we are doing now. All individual karma results from this process.
- kasa (*Korean*): brown piece of cloth worn around the neck or over the shoulders, symbolic of Buddhist vows and precepts.
- Kido (*Korean*): "energy way"; a chanting retreat.
- kong-an (*Korean; Japanese: koan*): a paradoxical or irrational statement used by Zen teachers to cut through students' thinking and bring them to realization.
- Kwan Seum Bosal (*Korean; Sanskrit: Avalokitesvara; Chinese: Kwan [Shih] Yin; Korean: Kwan Um; Japanese: Kannon, Kanzeon*): "one who perceives the cries of the world" and responds with compassionate aid; the bodhisattva of compassion.
- Kyol Che (*Korean*): "tight dharma"; in Korean Zen tradition, an intensive retreat of 21 to 90 days.
- Mahayana (*Sanskrit*) Buddhism: the Buddhism practiced in northern Asia; encompasses schools in China, Korea, Japan, and Tibet.
- mantra (*Sanskrit*): sounds or words used in meditation to cut through discriminating thoughts so the mind can become clear.
- moktak (*Korean*): fish-shaped wooden instrument used as a drum to set the rhythm for chanting.
- patriarch: the founder of a school and his successors in the transmission of its teaching.
- sangha (*Sanskrit*): in the Mahayana and Zen traditions, the community of all practitioners; may refer to a family of students under a particular master.
- senior dharma teacher: in the Kwan Um School of Zen, one who has met certain training requirements, usually over at least nine years, and has taken sixteen precepts.
- sutra (*Sanskrit*): Buddhist scriptures, consisting of discourses by the Buddha and his disciples.
- transmission: formal handing over of the lineage succession from teacher to student.
- Yong Maeng Jong Jin (*Korean*): literally, "valorous or intrepid concentration," paraphrased "to leap like a tiger while sitting." In the West it is a short silent retreat of two to seven days involving thirteen hours of formal meditation practice a day. Participants follow a schedule of bowing, sitting, chanting, eating, and working, with an emphasis on sitting meditation. During the retreat each participant has interviews with a Zen Master or Ji Do Poep Sa Nim.
- Zen (*Japanese; Korean: Son; Chinese: Ch'an; Sanskrit: Dhyana*): meditation practice.
- Zen center: meditation communities which may include a residence. All the Zen centers in the Kwan Um School of Zen are under the spiritual direction of Zen Master Seung Sahn, and each offers regular practice and periodic retreats. □

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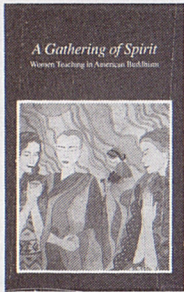
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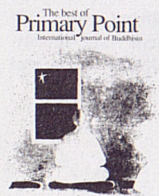
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The film combines excerpts from Zen Master Seung Sahn's public talks and private kong-an teaching; on-the-spot interviews with Do An Sunim JDPSN, Do Mun Sunim, and Mu Sang Sunim; and scenic footage from the group's adventures in Berlin, Oslo, Paris, Palma de Mallorca, Barcelona, and Frankfurt.

Wake Up! On the Road with a Zen Master is not only a rare, artfully-made portrait of an unusual and provocative teacher, but also a complete introduction to Zen Buddhism today. Zen Master Seung Sahn's students will especially value the film as a reminder of his warmth and energy, and will also want to show it to friends and family if stumped when they ask, "Why do you practice Zen?"

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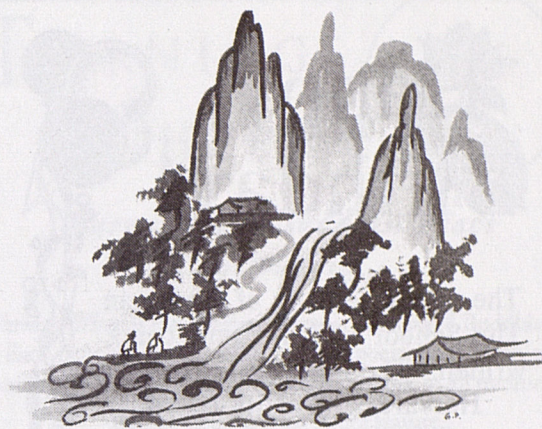
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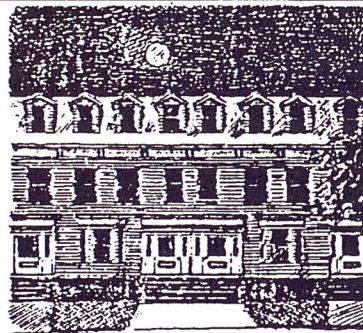
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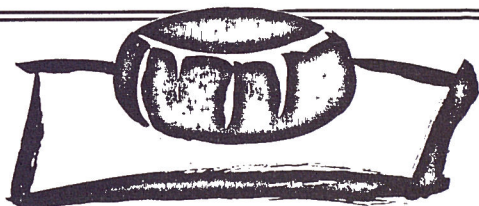
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