

PRIMARY POINT

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WORLD PEACE IS POSSIBLE

[The following talk was given by Zen Master Seung Sahn at Tahl Mah Sah Zen Center on January 19, 1983.]

Recently one of my students died. I went to his funeral at a church. The minister talked about God. He said that anytime you have a problem, if you just depend on God, the problem disappears. But sometimes this doesn't seem to be enough. Our life is impermanent, like smoke or water, like grass or flowers. Our life appears, then disappears. We worry about many things: money, family, our job, and also about the next life. Human life means worry. But human life also means, don't worry. If you understand impermanence, everything is okay. Problems appear because human beings always want more.

How do we control our desire for more, and our anger and ignorance? This is a very important point. In elementary school the students learn to study and play. They learn about their country and its boundaries. They learn, "This is my country and it starts here, ends here." After school when the students go home to their mothers, the idea of "my country" disappears. You are born into this world. When you are about to leave it, you think "This is my house, my family, my country." Your "I-my-me" appears. But when you die, this I-my-me disappears.

In childhood, you are your mother's child. When you grow up, you are the student of the universe. So this is your home. When you are born, where do you come from? When you die, where do you go? Everyone has a true home. Buddhism means becoming completely independent: not dependent on God or Buddha or your understanding. If you completely become your true self, there is no life or death, no coming or going.

A long time ago a Zen Master said:

Coming empty-handed, going empty-handed—that is human.

When you are born, where do you come from?

When you die, where do you go?

Life is like a floating cloud which appears.

Death is like a floating cloud which disappears.

The floating cloud itself originally does not exist.

Life and death, coming and going, are also like that.

But there is one thing which always remains clear.

It is pure and clear, no depending on life and death.

Then what is the one pure and clear thing?

If you find it, you are free from life and death. Why then would you need Buddha or Christ? You are already Buddha, you are the same as Christ. So put down all your opinions and understand your true self. If you understand what is the one pure and clear thing, there will be no problems, no life or death. It won't matter whether the sun rises or sets.

Our eyes see blue sky in the daytime, dark sky at night. High up in the sky it never changes. Only our eyes perceive a change. Where do your eyes come from? Now you have eyes, but before you were born you had no eyes. When you die, your eyes will disappear. Eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, mind: these are like the floating cloud which appears and disappears. Don't be attached to them. Put down all of your opinions and thinking.

When you are thinking, you perceive other people's minds as different from yours. If you cut off all thinking, your mind and my mind are the same, the same as Christ and Buddha. Then there are no opposites, no coming or going, no good and bad, no high and low, no you and me.

The sun never says, "I am the sun." The

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William K. Dalby, Providence Journal—Bulletin

CAMBRIDGE ZEN CENTER: A TEN YEAR PORTRAIT

by Ellen Sidor

Cambridge Zen Center has come a long way in just ten years: from three students in a small, rented apartment to becoming one of the largest residential Buddhist centers in metropolitan Boston. How could a handful of students, professors and ex-hippies blossom in such a short time into a well-respected spiritual group that is fully authorized as the first Buddhist monastery in the city of Cambridge? In making the massive financial and physical commitment of renovating an aging 40-room townhouse and adjacent building, Zen Center members have undergone many changes, and their perspectives on the function of the Center have become much wider. This review of the Zen Center's remarkable ten-year growth and maturing will look at the history of the Center, why it undertook a project of such magnitude, and what are the possible ramifications of their new location in a high energy urban setting.

ing anything, we see that everything has as its basis Zero. What is Zero? It is before thought, unfathomable, vast and inconceivable. Zero is the point we return to when we have run out of logical explanations. Far from being void and empty, it is rich and deep and all pervasive. It holds everything.

Jan. 19. Who is it that is facing all this stuff? Only reflective awareness. We set up a fake discipline and then congratulate ourselves for enduring it. Where there is discipline, there is fear—yet you have to start somewhere.

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Cambridge Zen Center began in June, 1974 when two students, Stephen Mitchell and Lynn Woodcock, decided to move with another student, Kevin Bell, to a house on 31 Fayerweather Street, Cambridge. A few weeks later Soen Sa Nim, who was still learning English and formulating the teaching language we use today, moved in and stayed the rest of the summer. "There wasn't much structure," said Cambridge Zen Center Vice-Abbot Dyan Houghton. "Lots of people would come just for an interview, and not even bow or sit. One day Becky (Rebecca Bernen) came in and told us that Soen Sa Nim wanted us to bow to him when he came. We didn't like that. One day we had a meeting with Soen Sa Nim. We told him we wanted Sunday off from practicing. Soen Sa Nim made it clear he wouldn't come anymore if people didn't bow and eat formally every day. It was always tightening and loosening, and gradually it got more structured."

From the beginning Cambridge Zen Center has been a center that attracted a lot of visitors. Even back in 1974 it was not uncommon for 50 people to appear for retreats, although few of them observed the forms that Soen Sa Nim was beginning to introduce. Today, ten years and three residences later, the Cambridge Zen Center has returned to Cambridge 3 blocks from busy Central Square, and it established on an entire block on Auburn Street, centrally located for public transportation to all parts of Boston and Cambridge. The new quarters, a 100-year old townhouse with 40 rooms and an adjacent building with 4 apartments, accommodates all 22 current Zen Center residents and still has room for 10-12 more. Today the visitors still come, some

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Journal of A Winter Solo

[Master Dharma Teacher George Bowman has returned to formal teaching following a year of silence, during which he worked on the construction of the new Diamond Hill Zen Monastery in Cumberland, RI. Between January and March of this year he did a two-month solo retreat in a cabin in Maine. The following excerpts are from a journal he kept on the retreat.]



Ruth Klein

Jan. 11. Everyone is headed home, like it or not. That is the one great longing in the human heart: to become one, to dissolve into all that is. It is disguised in so many ways, misinterpreted and sought after. Sexual release, that forgetting of self, is confused with the object of experience and so there is pain and sorrow and all the misery of human desire and sense of inadequacy.

If there is any great lesson, it is that from waking to sleep we are looking at our own face. Moment to moment it is none other than us. That which we like, that which brings satisfaction we are naturally drawn to—that which we don't like, we shrink away from.

Look at your everyday life—why is it that you return again and again to the same problems? Why not a new problem every day? What we fear most, what we hope is not our piece to unravel, is exactly what our job is, and if that is done with courage and straightforwardness, it is our unique and tremendously important offering to the universe.

Returning home is returning to balance to zero mind. Everything, mosquito or moose, has as its content Zero. A mosquito is a mosquito worth of zero. A moose is a moose worth of Zero. When we look at the world from the perspective of not hold-

Turning Point

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telling me I was good at my work. It also made my parents happy.

But still I used to go up the stairs and some days turn around and go back down again without knowing why. I figured those were just days I was screwed up. I'd write them off and go back the next day, do my experiments and my teaching, but there was a question in the back of my mind. Why were we doing all this in the first place? The professors I worked with in the biology department had a tacit agreement that what we were doing was of great value. If you ever doubted it, you could just voice a little question and you'd get overwhelming reassurance. Some part of my mind wondered about that, but I didn't listen. I was also getting no help from this world for listening to that voice. I tried to get through it somehow. I finished MIT, got my Ph.D., got great jobs, made a lot of money and got recognition, but it still wasn't enough. The people who were working with me had good jobs too, but they weren't happy. I was wondering about staying with it, getting sucked into this wonderful realm that depended on government grants. But whoever said you were supposed to be happy? I never took a course that told me how to figure that out.

I read books and went to hear different teachers, but nothing came of it. Finally I decided to take a breather, to work part time and do some other things I'd always wanted to do, like rebuild car engines. I saw my co-workers five and ten years ahead of me, and they were stuck because they couldn't do anything else. So I did a few unusual things and people thought I was a little eccentric, but it was OK. Then I met this Zen Master. He couldn't speak much English at the time, so he didn't sit me down and give me all the arguments about why I should become a Zen student. He just looked me square in the eyes and said, "What are you?" I don't remember what I said, maybe I said, "I'm a person, a human being." So he said, "Well, what's that? Come on!" He was serious, he wanted an answer! In a short time I had to say "I don't know. I don't know what you are talking about." And he said, "That's right!"

Here I was, 29 years old, a Ph.D. from MIT. Can you imagine having someone do that to you? What was I doing all those years? I watched him for a while, and he

was the first person I'd ever met who in fact lived what he said. Very striking. Not many people can do that. I was brought up a Protestant. I'd go to church on Sunday and the minister would get up, give this great talk, and everybody would go, "Yeah!" Then we'd all go back about our business. Then we'd go back to church the next Sunday and he'd talk again. But Soen Sa Nim was somebody who wasn't just talking, he was getting up at 4:30 every morning and working very hard.

I've been watching him for 11 years now. In all that time, the most remarkable thing is that I've never heard him say, "Boy, this is a drag. All these people asking me questions is a real pain. I'm going to take a break today." I've never seen him not believe in what he was doing. Can you imagine meeting someone like that? You could be a garbage man or anything, if you believed in what you were doing.

Practicing Zen is basically asking, can you do everything 100%? Our job is to find out how to do that. It's the difference between being alive or dreaming. A big part of what we do here is practice meditation. We have formal times when we come into the Dharma room and practice. We get up at 5 in the morning and do prostrations, sit for 30 minutes, and then do chanting. It's an exercise in how much of that time you can be there just doing that. If you can do it 5%, maybe you're awake and alive 5%. That's wonderful—it's more than a lot of people can do. If you could do it 50% you could change this planet. If you could do it 90%, you wouldn't believe what would happen.

Q: How do we attain the don't-know attitude during meditation?

LR: There's a story about a man who wanted to learn about meditation, so he went to a famous meditation teacher in India. "Please teach me about meditation," he asked. The teacher said, "Ok, go home tonight and don't think about monkeys." The man looked at him and asked, "Did I hear you right?" The teacher said, "Yes, you heard me. Just go home and try it. Come back tomorrow and let me know what happened."

The man went home and said, "Boy, this is going to be easy. I never think about monkeys. I ought to be great at this." Then all he could think about was monkeys. He couldn't sleep, he couldn't do anything, he was a wreck! He came back the next day

"I've seen it all—nothing is new." No longer an eager an innocent participant but already a cynical observer. Nothing's happening today, nothing is ever gonna happen. Life is insipid, dull, and meaningless—I'd shoot myself but it takes too much energy.

Underneath this flatness very definitely there is movement and restlessness. Boredom is a kind of aversion, an attempt to escape the overwhelming intensity and beauty of this moment. Ego is trapping itself and seeks for a diversion so its subtle game is not uncovered by the light of bare awareness. It is an attempt to secede from the union, to be isolated, to sustain the illusion by smokescreen.

If awareness is strong, suddenly life becomes intensely interesting. When you see clearly what you're doing to yourself, there is an instant replay that is NOT found in time. The whole drama is held in the palm of your hand. Aha! so that's how it is.

Boredom is aversion, which means something is happening. "I don't like this. I want to control, dominate, separate, criticize, and condemn." Life becomes the vast desert of sorrow, broken only by occasional bursts of joy and innocence like a horse dashing by an open window glimpsed only out of the corner of your eye.

In wildness and authentic being beyond control and good and bad is the horse of Pure doing.

Jan. 25. It's warm today. The woods are shrouded in soft grey mist. In the absence of fear, the woods are illuminated by a soft and tender light that embraces everything. Even the rocks and ice glow with this unknown softness. What a quiet joy and unknown bliss it is to walk upon this earth. Such a vast mystery—when the cunning mind is at rest. Such innocence and sensitivity. It is the look you see in the deer's eyes as they silently forage for food.

Why do we so steadfastly resist this simple awareness that is the heart of tender reverence untouched by thought or knowledge? What a price we have paid for our intelligence.

Truly, in front of the door is the land of

and the teacher asked, "What happened?" The man said, "It was terrible! All I could think about was monkeys." The teacher said, "Now you understand something about meditation."

Our teacher says that don't-know is before thinking. For years I would sit in practice and sometimes have a short time when I wasn't thinking about tomorrow or yesterday or the pain in my leg, and I'd say to myself, "This is it! This is not-thinking." That may sound stupid to you, and I can say it jokingly after 11 years, but it shows you what good a Ph.D. does. It takes years to get that out of your system. "Oh This is don't-know, this must be it." If I told you how you could maintain don't-know, that wouldn't be don't-know.

Human beings are interesting. We're the only species that is destroying its nest. We may be gone shortly because we don't know how to use our heads. Reading isn't bad, E=MC2 isn't bad, none of it's good or bad. It's just what it is. We may spend our time making Coca Cola or MacDonald's hamburgers and plastic containers for them and blow ourselves to smithereens, because we don't know how to use our heads.

Just study it like a biologist does. We're a mammal with a unique quality that other mammals don't have, a very large cerebral cortex for our body size. It gives us great language ability and the possibility of many choices, which means we can make nuclear weapons, television, send astronauts to the moon and make Mac-

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stillness and light. Imagination cannot bring about this simple transformation. It is simple grace, the unknown is awesome in its simplicity and quietness.

Jan. 27. Trust in the Roshi that resides deep in your own heart. Just consult yourself—what a relief. So much more to unfold. It seems to me that this basic trust and friendliness with yourself is the most basic of lessons, but so different to learn. Those scary places really are the growing edge of practice.

This morning I feel transformed, as though my consciousness has turned upside down. I'm sheepish even writing about it, thinking tomorrow I'll be restless and depressed and this poignant realization will have vanished like morning dew. "I" holds so tightly—for what purpose? What an incredible dark mistake when the territory it holds is so limited and when what is offered is so vast, intelligent, sane and friendly!

Feb. 1. For some time I thought understanding yourself meant understanding your content—that you are Don't Know. Any time you have a problem just ignore it and practice harder. But ignoring is a kind of knowing—it's looking the other way so you won't have to deal with it. In a sense part of my practice was a kind of anaesthetic to avoid pain.

Nowadays I'm interested in exactly how it is that this suffering comes about in my own mind. If I can be totally vulnerable and aware, the whole process should expose itself. It's not that I want to suffer, I don't want to be confused about it any longer.

Clear suffering is better than an escape. This body is my laboratory. Nobody, not Buddha, Freud, anyone, has any machinery I don't have, so I can work it out somehow.

Feb. 8. Brilliant clear morning, sky electric blue without a cloud, sun rising with the piercing white light only the cold winter sun knows.

Last night was a night of grace. How did I know to go to bed at chanting time only to wake at 12:30? Somehow the message got through all the shoulders and oughts and I did it in spite of myself. I'm such a heavy-handed customer—so slow and stubborn—like a tortoise.

I sat hour-long periods—they flew by without pain. I simply expanded into the bright light of awareness and my whole life became clear. The brain can't deal with it all. It can only remember that something profound happened. This morning I feel tired and a little confused because so much happened that I can't understand or isn't in my program.

First of all, all the demons and stuff appeared. I simply let myself turn to each one and make friends. It was an enormous relief. As though in my attempt to cut off thinking, I had cut off my basic intelligence and friendliness. It all came back.

Sitting was so light and buoyant. You had better hold your Mu lightly and not stick. Out of that came such light and warmth—it was boundless. Nothing that came near could resist. All the different minds that so often squabble over who will be boss, had found the true master. I saw quite clearly the fickleness of my moods.

Journal of a Solo

Continued from Page 1

In the pure activity there is no control, no discipline, no suppression—only the limitless activity of Dharma.

Jan. 20. A beautiful clear morning—six inches of new fallen powder, so pure and antiseptic it makes walking quite different. Anywhere you go you leave a tell-tale trail. I wonder if our thoughts and longings are marked out as clearly in the storehouse of our minds. What a maze of strange tracks and footprints it must be.

Last night was clear wonderful sitting. All sensation held in the palm of the unknown. The whisper of the breath, the crackle of the woodstove all taking place in the vastness with no boundary whatsoever.

Loose and natural, Rajneesh says. Be yourself. Much of what we do is some kind of resistance. "I won't be weak, I will be strong. Sit correctly. Do good, resist evil." I suppose it's better than nothing. We say, "Accept yourself," already there is a mind of rejection. How difficult not to make anything.

On retreats we climb to such a fine view and then throw it away. Go back down the mountain into everyday life of struggle with wife and kids—all the love as well as the pettiness and insanity and uptightness which is our real operating level.

So let us bow every morning for this wonderful opportunity to have the space and freedom not to make anything—to clarify the vision so we can return to the thick of it at least knowing which way to proceed when the fog gets thick.

This subtle, shadowless light penetrates all things—shines through all things. Frozen birch, crystal sky, all are embraced by it. Thought, reason, intellect, feeling are left far behind. Step off from the promontory of thought into the richness of unknowing and embracing all things.

Jan. 22. Another clear cloudless bitter cold day. The first big snow came a few weeks ago. This morning boredom had set in—

Donald's hamburgers.

But the evidence seems to point to the idea that we may be around for a very short time, in the scale of things. Recorded history is approximately 5,000 years. 10,000 years ago we were walking around wearing loincloths. Dinosaurs were around for two hundred million years and then they disappeared. It looks like we don't know how to use this unique quality that we have. In the last 80 years, human beings have killed about 70 million other human beings. As a species, we are doing some strange things and destroying our nest, and maybe we'll be gone soon.

I don't find that particularly depressing. It's a great opportunity to say, "Wait a second," and get out of the fast lane.

Q: It sounds like you have a set idea of what's good and bad. Aren't you trying not to?

LR: If I have, I'm sorry. I don't intend to. After graduate school I was trying very hard to find something useful to do with my training. I went as far as working in hospitals and doing medical research. A lot of people are sick and we have to help them. But it became really clear to me that you could help people by doing open heart surgery, but some of them had been smoking 4 packs of cigarettes a day for 40 years. You could spend your money and time making artificial hearts, but you could also go back to the source and try to figure out how to help people not destroy themselves. I've talked to a lot of people in emergency rooms and they say that they can't help 85% of the people that come in. You can give them sleeping pills, or tranquilizers, you can even sew up someone's arm after they've put it through a window, but the reason they did it was because they were drunk or mad at their wife and they will go back to that world. There's nothing you can do about it.

For me, using my training in a medical way didn't seem to address that problem. Now I see that you can do anything—be a doctor or lawyer or pump gas or be a cook—if you do it 100% and believe in it. If you pump gas and smile at everyone who comes in, and wipe their windshield and check their oil and don't rip them off, then you leave them better than when they came in. That's all you can do. If you do it completely, without checking, you can make a great contribution to this planet. I've seen some extraordinary people who do that who know nothing of Buddhism or Zen or

about practicing meditation.

I apologize if I'm presenting anything in the form of "This is bad" or "This is good." You can do anything, but if you're doing it just for money or for fame, then you want something and you can't pull it off. If you're not doing it for those things, you can do anything, even clean the streets.

We're still left with this question, "What can you do?" We have to find the answer. We all have ten fingers and ten toes and two eyes. We've got to use them, and time is short. You probably already know that every year time goes by a little faster. It gets even faster. By the time you're my age, it's really fast. I have a daughter who just turned 4. It seems like she was born a few days ago. She'll be leaving home soon, I can already tell.

"Practicing Zen is basically asking, can you do everything 100%? Our job is to find out how to do that. It's the difference between being alive or dreaming."

So this is not depressing or bad. Simply, what does it mean? We have to get on with this question and stop goofing off. One of the reasons why you're here probably is because your class required it. One of the reasons most of us are here is because we're interested in change. How do you change? How do you get out of habitual ways of seeing things? We have attitudes like "I have forever, I don't need to do anything," and lots of other ways of not paying attention.

A big part of practicing Zen is learning about your mind. The clearer you can see what your mind is doing, the clearer you can live. Not judging it good or bad, but just seeing what it is.

Now I understand there was something during those years at M.I.T. that I wasn't listening to. People get sick, they have jobs for 20 years that they hate, and they get ulcers or migraine headaches and wonder why. It's because they didn't listen to something their body was telling them. It was saying, "Hey, maybe you shouldn't be doing this!" or "How can you deal with this better?" There isn't anything we have to do, except listen.

If we keep paying attention, we will become as wise as the Buddha. That's all he ever did—he paid attention. He saw all of his mind's garbage, and then was able to help other people. He could live on this planet in a way that was not destructive, because he just listened. He didn't take someone else's word for it.

Q: You were talking about your daughter. How do you reconcile your relationships with your wife and child with your aim not to attach to anything?

LR: I don't think I said my aim was not to attach to anything. People used to ask Soen Sa Nim questions like that and he'd say, "No, no, you've got it wrong. I'm attached to everything!" If we could go and live alone on an island like Robinson Crusoe, then anything we did wouldn't matter. But as soon as you are with just one other person, what you do matters. Then add a whole bunch of people, this whole world—and you can't do just anything you want.

There's a lot of suffering. How could you ever marry and have children and imagine there wouldn't be suffering? Your

spouse and you are going to disagree, she could get sick, she's going to die someday. Anything can happen. Just putting yourself in that situation guarantees you're going to have suffering. But it seems to be what humans beings do, get married and have children.

Once you have a child, it's not just an idea any more, but someone actually sitting there looking into your eyes. It's not possible to avoid suffering by saying "I don't want to be attached to anything" or "I need to get away from this world." One of the valid criticisms about Buddhist practice is that some people are using it as an escape. If that's all our practice was, you couldn't reconcile it.

I feel very fortunate that, while we have this nice place and this practice of meditation together, there's a great emphasis on using the training to get stronger and clearer so we can help. If there's going to be any real value to it, if it's going to be more than just an exercise, it has to be of some use. The real practice isn't here, it's out in the world.

In the twelve years since he came to this country, our teacher has started many centers for people to practice on this continent, and even in Poland. He travels around trying to stir people into having a question about their lives, to ask, "What am I?" and use that to help this planet. Thank you very much for coming. I hope you'll come back again and ask more questions. □

School Classifieds

KUZS INTERNSHIP PROGRAM: The School is offering a new program for working in the School office. The work would include either regular business (Primary Point and other publications, a new book, kong-an books, transcription, etc.) or a special project. For periods of five days up to one month, the School would pay the intern's room and board fees at Providence Zen Center. If you are interested in learning more about the program, call or write School Director Mu Guk Sunim.

PZC STAFF SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM: PZC offers year-round staff scholarships to people interested in living and working in an American Zen community. Scholarships cover the cost of room and board and last one to three months. PZC is now inviting applications under this program for work in garden, kitchen or office areas. PZC is also building a traditional Korean-style monastery on its property and is offering scholarships to people with some carpentry skills or interests, for summer and fall 1984. Interested persons should send their resumes to PZC Director Mu Soeng Sunim, Providence Zen Center, 528 Pound Road, Cumberland, RI 02864.

BOOKKEEPER WANTED at Providence Zen Center. Duties include writing checks for PZC office and household needs, posting receipts and disbursements, receiving monthly rent and other dues from PZC members, making bank deposits, reconciling bank statements, petty cash. Must become a PZC resident. Salary includes room and board. Position can expand to full-time financial manager, with responsibility for reconciling journal and bank statements, generating monthly financial statements, budget projections. Send resume to Mu Soeng Sunim, Director, Providence Zen Center, 528 Pound Road, Cumberland, RI 02864.

NEW COOP BAKERY slated to open in fall on PZC grounds is requesting loans and donations for construction starting soon. One-third of the necessary \$16,000 has already been pledged. Bakery will feature a wood-fired, brick oven for baking traditional sourdough bread and will employ resident Zen students. Also needed: chain saw, commercial dough mixer, sprouting machine, calculator, office supplies, delivery vehicle. Contact Mary Hardy or Peter Kennedy at Providence Zen Center, 528 Pound Road, Cumberland, RI 02864 or call 401-769-2499.



Never sticking anywhere even for a moment:

"As a butterfly lost in flowers
As a child fondling mother's breast
As a bird settled on the tree
67 years of this life
I have played with God."

Joshu Sasaki

Feb. 12. A soft, warm misty day. This morning I put out some rice and lentils for any hungry critters that might pass this way. Everywhere are the heart-shaped hoofprints of timid deer. They know too much of man's ways to let themselves be seen easily.

Everyone lives in fear underneath the facade of everyday life. It is the fear of being isolated, naked and alone—left with the sorrow of the impermanency and transiency of this short life. So we console ourselves and pad our existence with ideas and endless mental chatter. Transcending this fear of apparent separation is the foundation of any worthwhile practice. We armor ourselves against the experience, rarely look it square in the face without judgement. Fear keeps us from making friends with our world. Of course there are things to be fearful of—hot stoves, poisonous snakes. But if you reject the snake, you are afraid to greet a piece of yourself, and so live in fear.

It is the deep psychological and existential fears that we try to deal with on a very primitive animal level. They cannot be dealt with through fight or flight, but only by

clear, unflinching awareness that simply sees how things are.

This morning I saw how fearful I often am of the world. Afraid that people will hassle or ridicule me—not give me space to be myself. This fear of aloneness and insufficiency drives us to meet the images of society. I want to be supported, so I became what others think I ought to be. All the while others are doing the same thing. A very reactionary kind of existence. Most lives are so unexamined. In the end there is nothing to do but relax into being yourself...

March 5. Woke at 9—made a fire and practiced until 6:30 the next morning. There was no will involved, no choice. It was an exhausting night—the body complained but to no avail.

A lot of satisfying thinking appeared. What is the unknown? In the head it's called cognition. In the heart it's called love. In the hara it's called will. In the entire body it's called prajna wisdom. For the eyes it's called seeing, in the ears it's called hearing, in the nose it's called smelling. Who is the Master—just who is bright and full of awareness and unhindered?

Mind light is the master—just stay aware and it becomes luminous and clear. Very simple. Now using it skillfully is a whole universe I know nothing about!

Soft grey misty day. Quiet illumination. Delicate, soft, vulnerable as a pussywillow is this day—too soon to disappear. How precious this all is. □

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by
Toni Packer
resident teacher of the
Genesee Valley Zen Center

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