

PRIMARY POINT

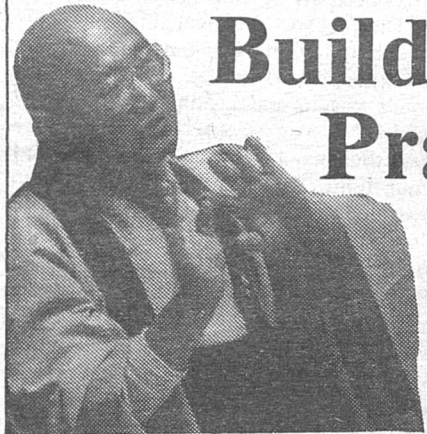
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Soen Sa Nim's New Teaching in Europe:

Four Posts to Build a Strong Practicing House



Zen Master Seung Sahn

by Do Mun Sunim,
Abbot, Paris Dharma Center

Photo by Do Mun Sunim

The Buddha used expedient means to enlighten all beings. In 1972, when Zen Master Seung Sahn first came to the West, he adapted Korean Buddhism for the minds of his American students. On recent trips to Europe, he has been changing his teaching style to meet the needs of European students, and to reflect the changing condition of human beings and the world. He calls this "the teaching of the Four Posts" and has called upon the abilities of Dr. Danette Choi, founder of Hawaii Dharma Temple in Honolulu, and an American Kwan Um Zen School monk, Mu Sang Sunim.

Zen Master Seung Sahn's style has always been to first teach students their correct direction, then help them develop a strong personal center. In the past, if someone asked Soen Sa Nim (which means "honored teacher") about practicing the martial arts to make one's center strong, he always said, "That's only technique. Why you do it is most important."

Soen Sa Nim is very proud of the School's teaching which unites formal practice, kong-an study, and everyday life, not only in theory and formal practice, but also in the very structure of life at the School's Zen centers. In Dharma talks and interviews, he teaches correct cognition. But he has always said, "Only understanding cannot help you. Getting a strong before-thinking center is necessary. In the past, a person could hear one word, go to the mountains and just sit for three years and attain true nature. But nowadays human beings' minds are too complicated. Also this world is very complicated and changing very fast. It is not possible to just sit and become clear. If you want to attain true nature, if you want to change with this universe, you must find a way to quickly connect your energy and universal energy."

In 1982 Soen Sa Nim started a very strong regime of doing 1000 bows a day and getting up every night from midnight until 2 a.m. for special practice. During that time he developed Soen Yu (Zen Wind) and Soen Pung (Zen Dharma play). He has been refining and elaborating these ever since. They are a series of exercises designed to

quickly cut thinking, connect our energy with the energy of the universe, and help us return to our true nature. They are like old Taoist practices, but the direction is to learn how to use this energy. Kwan Um Zen School monk Mu Sang Sunim has been studying and practicing these techniques for the past four years with Soen Sa Nim and is now master of Soen Yu. Last fall Soen Sa Nim asked him to teach these practices in Europe.

Many people experience deep blockages in their lives and practice, blockages that are physical, emotional, spiritual and in relationships. Soen Sa Nim has been encouraging Dr. Danette Choi (see the previous issue of *Primary Point* for an article on her background) to spend more time in Europe teaching people. This past fall, in all of the School's workshops and retreats in Spain, England and France, the first unified teaching of the Four Posts was offered, as Soen Sa Nim said, "to build a strong practicing house."

The Four Posts were (1) Mu Sang Sunim teaching Soen Yu and Dharma play; (2) Dr. Choi giving Dharma talks, personal coun-

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NANCY WILSON ROSS 1901-1986

The internationally acclaimed editor of *The World of Zen* and author of numerous books and articles on Buddhism, Nancy Wilson Ross (who was known to many people as Mrs. Stanley Young) died in Vero Beach, Florida, on January 18. She was 85 years old.

The famous Buddhist scholar Sir Herbert Read said of *The World of Zen*, "This is the book we have been waiting for—one that would gather into a single comprehensive volume the main features of an Eastern philosophy that is becoming a creative force in the Western World. Zen is a way of life, of universal relevance, and this volume, which makes it accessible, is likely to have a wide influence on our culture."

A member of the board of the Asian Society of New York City, Ms. Ross was the author of *Three Ways of Asian Wisdom and Buddhism: A Way of Life and Thought*, in addition to a number of novels including *The Return of Lady Brace*. She wrote an introduction to Yukio Mishima's *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*, a novel about a Buddhist priest.

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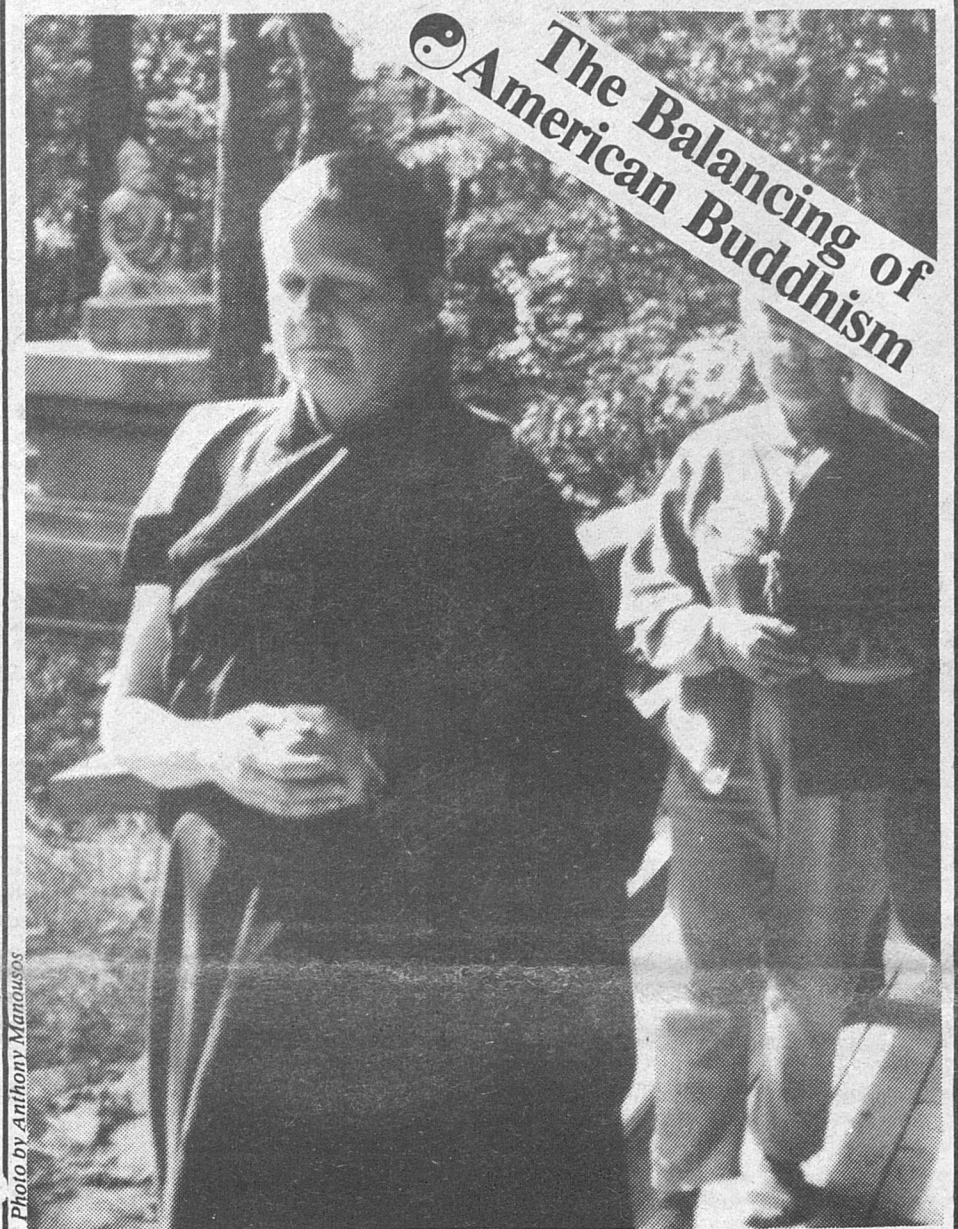


Photo by Anthony Manausos

PEMA CHODRON leading walking meditation at the September conference.

Four noted American women Buddhist teachers explored the changing face of American Buddhism in a conference entitled "The Balancing of American Buddhism" held last September at the Providence Zen Center in Cumberland, RI. The conference, the third in an annual series focusing on women Buddhist teachers, drew over 120 participants for the weekend of talks and discussions. Preceding the conference, Maurine Myo On Freedgood, Roshi, of the Cambridge Buddhist Association, led a three day Zen meditation retreat attended by 45 people.

In this issue of *Primary Point* we present three of the talks and a sizeable portion of the lively Saturday night panel discussion with all four teachers. Unfortunately, transcribing and editing were not able to be completed on Ruth Denison's talk in time for this issue. It will be included in the May issue. Complete transcripts of all the talks and panel discussions may be ordered at \$2.50 each from The Director, Providence Zen Center, 528 Pound Road, Cumberland, RI 02864.

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TWO KYOL CHE RETREATS UNDERWAY IN USA AND KOREA

Two 90 day intensive meditation retreats are underway, one in Cumberland, RI, and the other in Korea. This year the Diamond Hill Zen Monastery and Providence Zen Center combined their Kyol Che retreats into one. Master Dharma Teacher Lincoln Rhodes led the first three weeks and then left for an extended solo retreat in Western Massachusetts. His wife, Master Dharma Teacher Barbara Rhodes, has taken over as the retreat leader.

Ten people started sitting January 5 at the monastery, including two Korean monks. The monastery is located on a picturesque knoll overlooking a pond and is surrounded on three sides by woodland.

Brief excerpts from the Dharma talks at the opening ceremony follow.

Master Dharma Teacher Barbara Rhodes: "This is the time to tighten our practice. Just as our heart contracts to force the life-giving oxygenated blood through our bodies, so our practice must contract. A strong 'practice contractor' is extremely important; it gives us insight, focus and direction.

The rest between Kyol Che's is equally important. We call it 'Hae Jae.' Just as the heart muscle must expand and rest, so must we enter Hae Jae and allow the fruits of our practice to show us our way...Our oxygenated blood knows how to enter each cell. Our Dharma light knows how to enter all beings."

Master Dharma Teacher Lincoln Rhodes: "Everyone has ghosts. We're lucky enough to have a better situation so that we can come to practicing as a way of seeing our ghosts and coming to terms with them....Having a chance to sit is really a chance to see our mind making opportunities. There is no limit to the number of things that this mind could get involved with and have good feelings or bad feelings about, like or dislike, happy or unhappy.... In taking the opportunity to sit a retreat, you can't blame it on anybody. So you see all those things. If we can be honest and just sit there and see the mind do its thing, we'll have to take responsibility for it. That's actually a staggering thing to do—to own up to being the source of all those mind states...A retreat is a great opportunity to take away those painful states and to enjoy the space that's left when we're not all caught up in that stuff."

A total of 130 people sat parts of the historic first 90 day meditation retreat held last summer at Warsaw Zen Center under the direction of the Kwan Um Zen School of Poland. American teachers were able to lead parts of the retreat, including Master Dharma Teacher Barbara Rhodes and Polish-born Jacob Perl, who traveled to Poland twice from his home base in New York City to open and close the retreat. Many students from other Zen sanghas in Poland participated. Dharma Teacher Robert Genthner, a psychologist and director of the Lexington, KY, Zen Center, accompanied Bobby Rhodes in August and led a communications workshop.

An excerpt from a letter from Jacek Szezan, Head Dharma Teacher of the Krakow Zen Center, follows.

"I did not write to you for a long time because I had been sitting at our first Polish Kyol Che for 90 days. I am very happy I did it, in spite of big troubles with my leg during one month. Only two persons finished all 90 days—me and Ania Arseniuk, who was Kyol Che housemaster. Our Abbot Andrzej (Czarnecki) was sitting for 69 days, and 5 other people sat for 49 days. Conditions of this sitting, as you know, were very difficult, because it was impossible to avoid contacts with people living in Warsaw Zen Center and guests, especially in the kitchen and in the bathroom. But if we were able to keep practice in those conditions, we will be able to do it in our everyday life.

Basia (Bobby) and Jakub (Jacob) were teaching us wonderfully and were checking our minds hardily. How much trash we still have in our heads, how many difficulties in keeping practice in our everyday life! How much we "know" still! All this stimulated



Photo by Do Mun Sunim

TAKING PRECEPTS in Korea just prior to starting a 90 day intensive retreat in the mountains are (l to r) Arno Schuh of Germany; Do Won Sunim (formerly Nancy Brown of Cambridge, MA, Zen Center); Do Ryeon Sunim (formerly David Ledebor of Seoul International Zen Center); and a Korean monk.

Not Only Hui Neng's Mistake

What is this?

The Sixth Patriarch made the name "originally nothing;" so he made all sentient beings stupid.

The Seventh Patriarch said, "If you practice originally nothing you can get something, but don't get caught on it and become a sentient being;" so he made all sentient beings not know what to do with their bodies.

Mang Gong Zen Master drew a circle O

He only made a hole.

If I were there, I would hit those 3 sentient beings and feed them to the hungry fish.

Hey you stupid sentient being!

Don't make originally nothing!

Don't make not being as a human being!

Don't make O too!

Then, What is this?

When there is universe, become universe.

When there is ocean, become ocean.

When there is Buddha, become Buddha.

When there is Kwan Seum Bosal, become Kwan Seum Bosal.

Everytime you see, reflect.

Become one, same body

Just like a mirror

There is no name, no form.

What is this?

KATZ!

Sun setting, moon appears

Autumn night, cold wind

Makes you pull your coat up

Honey, it's cold, can I put another blanket on you?

October 22, 1985

Ji Kwang (Dr. Danette Choi)

First Polish Kyol Che Retreat A Big Success

us to hard practice. We did 1200 bows every day and we were trying, trying, trying...

Bob (Genthner) helped us a lot with his workshop and we have seen how it is possible to help ourselves and other people. During all the Kyol Che 130 people were sitting. They were not only from our school but from Vajrayana (Karma-Kagyü), from Roshi Kaplan's group ("Sangha") and Gempo Sensei's group (Kanzeon) too. In the first part 25 people were sitting; in the 2d, 19; in the 3d, (the extra-intensive week) 55; in the 4th, 13; in the 5th, 20.

It was great experience, unusual for our Polish sangha but it was nothing special too: how is Kyol Che different from everyday life? And it is hopeful for the future, that 70% of Kyol Che participants had not even Five Precepts...

In October, Soen Sa Nim came for eight days for a flurry of retreats, ceremonies and a wedding. Jacek continues, "Soen Sa Nim

came on Wednesday, October 16, and the YMJJ (retreat) for Dharma teachers started this day, too. On Thursday a 3-day retreat was started. Almost 160 people took part in this retreat. We had never seen such a crowd in "Do Am Sa" temple (The Warsaw Zen Center). In the Dharma room (50 sq. meters) about 100 people were sitting in six lines (!), and a lot of people were sitting in the little room before the Dharma room (place of robes and bowls) too. All others were sitting in other possible places. We all had one toilet and one bathroom. But it was ok, as usual...

Soen Sa Nim was very strong and had very good sense of humor. He gave some wonderful Dharma talks and answered a lot of questions. He was invited by Gempo Sensei's students. It was a very fine meeting with about 50 people in a very small room. He was invited by Roshi Kapleau students too...

The Korean Intensive

The retreat at Su Dok Sah temple in Korea started November 27 and included 12 people from six countries: Korea, Canada, U.S., Germany, England and Spain. Two American students took novice monk vows in a Precepts Ceremony November 23 officiated by Soen Sa Nim: former Cambridge Zen Center director Nancy Brown became Do Won Sunim, and Seoul International Zen Center director David Ledebor became Do Ryeon Sunim. At some point during the retreat, the 8 overseas people will have to go to Japan for one day in order to renew their 90 day Korean tourist visas.

The retreat, originally planned to be held at the tiny mountain temple Jeung Hae Sa, could not take place there because the heating system of the Son Bang (Zen room) needed repair. Therefore participants are sitting down at the bottom of the mountain at bustling Su Dok Sa, a major tourist attraction in the middle of a national park. Excerpts from a letter from Do Ryeon Sunim follow.

"Soen Sa Nim says the "wind water" energy of the temple here is very good. A very busy place, with construction of a lecture hall in progress on one side of the Son Bang, and many tourists visiting the main Buddha hall on the other side. I asked SSN about practicing in a noisy place and he said, "If you attain quiet in quietness, that is not true quiet. If you attain quiet in noise, then that is true quiet." So we are all following our School name and only Perceiving World Sound.

We chant, bow and sit, all in the Son Bang. This is very different from the traditional Korean style Kyol Che. They only bow 3 times (instead of 108) to the Buddha in the morning and evening, and sit all day. So this new style with chanting and bowing is difficult for them to understand sometimes. But we are only going straight for 90 days.

The monks here at Su Dok Sa are very wonderful. The Abbot, U Chon Sunim and the resident Zen Master, Won Dam Sunim, are very kind and always try to help us. Sometimes one or two Korean monks sit with us, also some "Bo Sal Nims" (women devoted to the temple) come to sit with us. We get to take a hot bath once a week, "whether we need one or not."

The retreat will end in late February and participants will be able to travel around Korea sightseeing.

On Tuesday, Mu Sang Sunim (an American monk accompanying Soen Sa Nim) prepared a big ceremony for 49 days after his father's death. About 50 people took part in this ceremony. It was the first ceremony like this in Poland, and it was a really exciting experience for all of us. On Tuesday was the public meeting with Soen Sa Nim in the Institute of Psychology in Warsaw. About 400 people came to this meeting, especially psychologists, professors and students of psychology. After this meeting a lot of people came to SSN to give him thanks for his teaching." □

NANCY WILSON ROSS

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Born in Olympia, Washington, on Nov. 22, 1901, she graduated from the University of Oregon with interests in the arts and philosophy of Asia. She studied at the famous Bauhaus in Germany in its last two years before Hitler. In 1939 she made her first trip to China, Korea and Japan, a trip which greatly influenced her and which was the first of many. She wrote on Asian subjects for many years for numerous magazines, including *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Horizon*, *Mademoiselle*, *The New Yorker* and *Vogue*. In 1964 she lectured on Zen at the Jungian Institute in Zurich, Switzerland.

Since her husband, Stanley Young, died in 1975, she had been living most recently in Old Westbury, New York. Contributions in her memory can be made to the non-profit Callipeplon Society, 44 Montgomery Street, Thirtieth Floor, San Francisco, CA 94104 for the Parallax Press, a Buddhist publishing project.