

Special Issue: Zen And Psychotherapy

PRIMARY POINT

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ZEN MEANS, NEVER FOLLOW THE TEACHER



BUDDHISM AND QUAKERISM MEET at Temenos, a retreat and workshop center in Shutesbury, Massachusetts. Story on Page 8.

The following exchange is from a lively panel discussion August 2nd during the School Congress of the Kwan Um Zen School, between Zen Master Seung Sahn, who is addressed as "Soen Sa Nim" by his students, his six American Master Dharma Teachers, and students in the audience. There was a preliminary discussion of why most of the KUZS chants are in Korean and not chanted in English. Soen Sa Nim pointed out that having a universal language for the chanting makes it possible to have a unified style within the School, which now has groups in seven countries outside North America. Master Dharma Teacher Richard Shrobe moderated the discussion.

Ken Kessel [a Senior Dharma teacher and a director of Chogye International Zen Center]: This is a question for both teachers and students. All of us—maybe new students more than older students—tend to idealize the teachers and to have very high expectations of them. How can we help people to not do that so much?

George Bowman [Master Dharma Teacher]: Being in a teaching capacity, I have always felt—ever since SSN put me in that position—that somehow I have an obligation (I don't know if that's the right word, but I can't think of another) to practice much harder. To be put in that position basically made me examine myself more and want to practice much harder than I had before. Initially it was kind of an embarrassment. I felt extremely shy and unprepared, but now I don't feel that way. Now I feel quite comfortable and enjoy doing it, but all the same, I have the sense all the time of a certain obligation to practice harder than other people, because of where I find myself.

Richard Shrobe [Master Dharma Teacher]: My attitude is a little different. I'm a student just like everyone else, perhaps I'm older and more experienced student, but nevertheless a student. That's the general place I try to come from. If someone has a need to see a teacher (whether it's me or someone else) as special, that may be their particular need for the moment and it might be useful for them at that time, but I don't feel obliged to be anything other than whom I am and how I see myself.

Mu Deung Sunim [a monk and Master Dharma Teacher]: When I lead retreats or am supposedly acting in a teaching capacity, I try to feel very close with people. You said "students," so I'll use that word, but I try not to let myself think of someone as a student, but more as my friend, someone who maybe needs something, so how can I help you? I like being warm and close when anyone comes [to me], but my idea is not so much wanting to teach something, but more wanting to help somehow, in whatever way comes out.

experiences and sharing that. It's a wonderful reciprocal relationship, and it's fairly simple and straightforward. But I experience another situation living in a community with a lot of people and being Abbot of the School, and having people look at you. If you come to work one day feeling "Oh my god," people wonder what's going on and if you really want to do this and whether it's important.

That happens to me sometimes. You get these expectations because you're working with people and living with them all the time. Also if I'm having a tough time, people wonder what my role as teacher is or should be. Some days you have an off day and you end up doing that in a fishbowl with a whole lot of people. It's wonderful in some ways, because you can't hide anything and so you get great feedback about how clear you are, but there's also some unrealistic pressures that I often feel. We have various projects and everyone sees how

"Following the teacher means [following] the outside form. If you do that, you will never get enlightenment."

Soen Sa Nim: What was the point of that question?

Richard Shrobe: Sometimes students see the teacher as higher, the student as lower, and how do we as teachers handle that? Does it bother us or not, do we take advantage of that?

Lincoln Rhodes [Master Dharma Teacher]: This is making kind of an artificial distinction perhaps, but I've experienced different roles as a teacher. Sometimes when I've gone to another Zen Center like Berkeley, where I don't go very often, there's a wonderful interest in hearing about and practicing Buddhism, people wanting to hear your

much enthusiasm I have for them. I'm not singling myself out, because we all look at each other in that way, but if you take on some roles like that [Abbot or teacher], then you end up having expectations on you. I feel a fair amount of pressure sometimes from those roles.

Just doing a retreat for a weekend where a whole bunch of people have come together and want to sit and share interviews and koan practice and Dharma talks, that's a wonderful sharing experience and not too complicated.

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NEVER FOLLOW THE TEACHER

Ellen Sidor [editor of PRIMARY POINT]: Linc, you're one of the few Master Dharma teachers who takes a heavy administrative role. That's one of the big differences between the Korean tradition and our tradition. I wonder if among the six of you, there's some direction of separating those roles, which seem to have created a lot of frustration.



Ellen Sidor, Editor, Primary Point

Lincoln Rhodes: That was true for SSN too, because he did that [both teach and administer] for a long time. It would be wonderful if those roles could be separated. I'm all for it.

Soen Sa Nim: In Korea, there's a kind of Zen student called "un sui," which means cloud and water, a kind of hippie monk. They live in a very interesting way. They never think about their teacher as being high and themselves as being low, or whether someday they will become a great Zen Master. They become completely independent. "Un sui" means no hindrance. They sit together and then finish, but don't bow to others or to the Zen Master.

But if you have a Zen Center, there are rules. If you go to one, you must follow the rules, that's very important. "Un sui" don't follow the rules and they don't respect teachers or Buddha or anything. Our

"If you depend on something, then high and low appear. If you believe in something, there is no high or low."

School style means a lot of chanting. But in Korea in the morning, monks only bow six times and in the evening, that's all. No chanting. When it's sitting time, if they're very sleepy, they go and take a cold shower, then come in and sit again. They completely become independent.

So all the time I come here and talk about how you must become completely independent, not depend on Buddha or a teacher or anything. But some American students are too dependent on teachers, so they have a problem. Zen students must have a stronger center. The Japanese style of Zen is very different from the Korean Zen style. In Japanese style, the Zen Master is very high, very strong, and controls everything—"You do this, you do that!" like a samurai. The student cannot do anything but only follow the teacher.

In Korea, students never have interviews. Many years pass without interviews. The Zen Master and the student have no communication, maybe just a Dharma talk once or twice a month. At some Korean Zen Centers, there is no teacher contact at Kyol Che (intensive meditation retreat time) except for an opening and closing Dharma talk, that's all. "What is my direction?" is what is important. Making someone high or low is not necessary. The Buddha and I are equal, the Bodhisattvas and I are equal. This mind is very important.

Ken Kessel: We must be difficult [students], because you want to teach us to become independent, but many of us come to you and the other teachers and ask, "What shall I do with my life? Tell me." Also because you are a Korean monk, many Koreans come to you and ask you to do things for them.

Soen Sa Nim: Yes, those are not Zen students. Only chanting and praying students. The Western mind is dependent on something, wants something from the outside. The Oriental mind wants something from the inside, so they don't like interviews. American students like interviews.

Diana Clark [a Senior Dharma Teacher and founder of Empty Gate Zen Center]: I get two messages from what you say: one is, become independent. The other is, with the structure we have, anytime the teacher is correct, the student is not correct. So we must bow and have this form where the teachers always have the answers. When students come, "You don't know anything." That's not equality. This bothers me a lot, not so much with you, SSN, but with the Master Dharma Teachers. Maybe it bothers me because it's [my] jealousy, but it's the set-up, where they have the answers and we don't. It gets in my way, this hierarchy, this high and low. We say we don't believe in it, but it's there in our whole School.

Soen Sa Nim: So that's Western mind. In China or Korea, if you meet a Zen Master and get a hwa-tu [kong-an], then it may be many years before you meet again. Some day—blam!—get enlightenment, then visit



Neil Pregozen, New Haven Zen Center

the Zen Master. Not believing in the Zen Master and not depending on the Zen Master are different, ok? If you believe in the Zen Master, then you are not dependent on the Zen Master. If you depend on something, then high and low appear. If you believe in something, there is no high or low. Even if you only meet the Zen Master one time, then go to the mountain for many years, inside already you and the Zen Master are never separate, even if many years pass. That's believing.

If you depend on the Zen Master, then anytime you are checking something. "My teacher is correct or not correct. My teacher is no good! Why doesn't my teacher love me?" This style of mind appears. But if you believe in the Zen Master, you never check. Mang Gong Zen Master, Chu Sahn Zen Master, sometimes did many strange actions, but their students never checked them. "That's the Zen Master's job, not my job. I only believe him, I believe his Dharma. I don't care about his actions, I only follow his Dharma." That is believing.

If you depend on something, then this style of checking mind appears. "Why did he do this, why that?"

Richard Shrobe to Diana: When you say, teachers have the answers, are you talking about formal kong-an practice, or about getting answers about "how to live my life?"

Diana Clark: It's the whole structure, from interviews to Dharma talks, where we must ask questions and the teacher is the one to give the answer. If you challenge this, you're likely to get into trouble in certain instances. Sometimes, but not always, because it's the form, we ask the question because we don't know, but the teacher



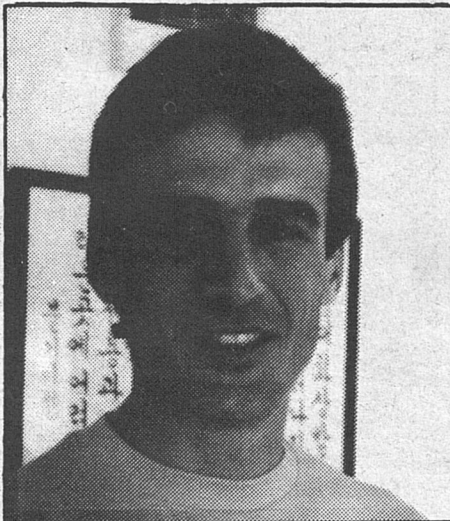
At the School Congress: l to r, School Director Richard Streitfeld, Empty Gate Zen Center Abbot Jeff Kitzes, School Abbot Lincoln Rhodes.

knows. That's just the way it is, and some teachers handle it much differently than others.

I guess my doctrine before Zen was much more egalitarian, where everyone had something to offer. Then it was much more give and take. But in our School the authority is with the teachers. They have inga, they have all of the credentials, and we as students don't. I've obviously had my problems about it, and I see that it's a lot of my own ego. Why not me?—and all that. But there's usually a grain of truth in there somewhere. I think it's something that doesn't work as well in the United States as it perhaps does in the Orient.

Soen Sa Nim: I think that being a Zen student means first, it's very important that your direction becomes clear. Why do you practice? If this practicing is only for me, then I'll have a big problem. But if the direction of my practice is not only for me, but for other people, than even if I have a problem, it's not a problem. Also the teacher and me, no problem. The teacher answering questions is no problem. But if my direction is not clear, then problems always appear because checking mind appears: checking me, checking the teacher.

Sometimes the question is not clear. Even if the teacher gives a good answer, the questioner cannot get it into his head. Or even if he can take it in, he is not able to do it. He understands it's the correct way, but cannot do it. If your direction is not clear, your practicing is not clear. If your practicing is not clear, then you still have your karma. If you still have your karma, even if your understanding is the same as Buddha's, your



Jan Sendzimir, Gainesville Zen Circle

"Zen students must have a stronger center."

action is the same as a dog's. "Yes, I understand everything, but I cannot do anything." Many desires appear, anger appears. Anger is no good, but it appears. Desire is not good, but it appears. What can you do?

That is what happens when your direction is not clear and you are not practicing strongly. So it's very important for a Zen student's direction to be clear. Why do you practice? In America, there are many kinds of meditation. Zen meditation means completely, 100% I am Zen student. Maybe one minute afterwards, a mistake, but now my direction is that. Mistake, make correct. Another mistake, again correct. That's a very important point.

Q: I want to ask the Master Dharma Teachers if they feel the students depend on them too much.

Barbara Rhodes [Master Dharma Teacher]: I feel fortunate because most of the people I'm with are the same age as I am or not that much younger and they give me a real

hard time sometimes, which is good for me. It's very humbling. As George said, it makes me practice much harder. The more that's expected from me, the harder I practice. As far as koan practice goes, it's a game. The teacher is given a stick and a better cushion or something—it's a set-up. It's supposed to be. Traditionally it's always been that way and if the teacher had a lot of ego, it's going to be a big problem. If the student has a lot of ego, that's a big problem too. But it's such a nice system, that both egos appear and it [koan practice] can be helpful to both people.

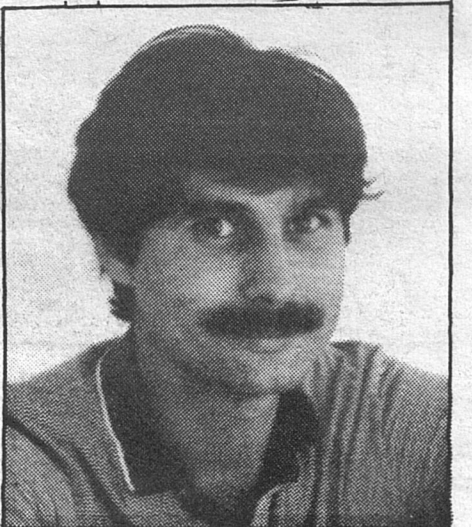
I always ask students, "Please, come ask me a question, any kind of koan or anything." The older students I tell, "Hit me, try to hit me." Often they do and I can't answer a koan and that's wonderful, because then I have some work to do for when they come in the next time. I have ego, students have ego, and that's just more fruit to work with. Sometimes it's a bad feeling. But if we're both practicing "What is this?" then it's usually worked out.

Jacob Perl [Master Dharma Teacher]: I have limited experience, also a little different experience. Primarily I've been teaching in Poland, not so much in the United States. In the United States, I think people have a very realistic idea of what a teacher is, that a teacher is just human and not really different from anyone else. As Richard pointed out, we are students. I think for the most part people do understand that.

What I find in Poland is that it looks like people there idealize the teacher because they have so much respect. But a teacher does not have to be a Master Dharma Teacher. When any senior student goes to Poland, he/she will be personally treated with as much respect as a Master Dharma Teacher or Soen Sa Nim or another teacher who has come to visit. So I have not found it [overdependence on a teacher] to be a problem for the most part. Some people do come with questions about their life or try to show something where they are dependent on a teacher. But with the kind of teaching we have in our School, most of us throw [the question] right back at the person and have them deal with their problem and take responsibility for their own life.

Opportunity for any kind of abuse exists on both sides, and it's not the fault of the set-up. The opportunity exists no matter what set-up you will have.

Dennis Duermeier [director of Kansas Zen Center]: Thinking about what SSN said, I think that any hierarchy that's here has



Mark Houghton, Cambridge Zen Center



Zen Master Seung Sahn

been put here by us as students and as Americans, because if we hadn't put SSN up in front of the room where he is now, he'd still be washing clothes in a laundromat. [SSN's first job in this country when he came in 1972]. He didn't come here and say, "Well, I'm a great Zen Master. I'm here to teach you all and you should all worship me." He was washing clothes and we all put him in that position [in front of the room] so that he would teach us. So if there's any hierarchy here or any pedestal action going on, it's clearly the fault of the students and not the teachers.

From what George said, he felt it was easier on us than him. I don't think anyone sitting up there feels superior at all or is trying to lord it over anyone, or feels that he/she has any authority or even truth that isn't available to everyone. I'm sure that if I sat for 50 years, I could figure out all these things for myself, but it's just easier to have someone smoothing the way for me. That's probably the best way to look at it, [that we're] just trying to learn from someone, not because they're better than you but because maybe they can help you out.

Q: Being a new student, I have experienced at least three of the Master Dharma teachers at the table [here tonight] and obviously personality has something to do with the teacher's teaching style. But as I've encountered each teacher, they have always made me think of what SSN has said, "Why do you practice?" They have always turned my questions around to make me deal with my own problems. No teacher has ever sat up like a Buddha and said, "I have the answers." My experience at Chogyo [International Zen Center] in New York has been that even some of the older students have helped me and I look up at some of them as my teachers. Because of their experience as Dharma Teachers and just being in the School over a period of time, they have helped me make my direction a bit clearer.

But I also have the feeling—and I'd like to know how you feel about it—that when you're put in the position of Dharma

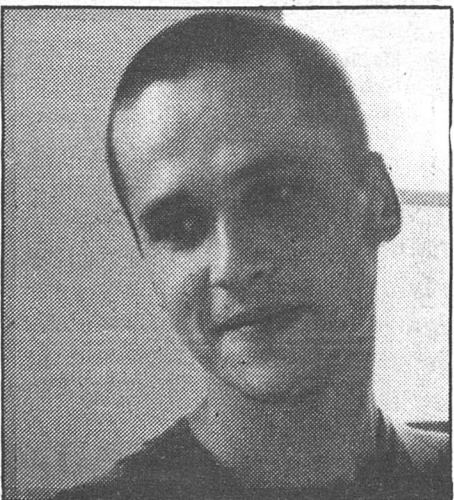
Teacher or head teacher, that you do have some kind of responsibility to be like a role model. How could I follow or be part of the organization if the teachers didn't do something to make me respect them? One of the things that attracts me to this School is that when we have a Yong Maeng Jong Jin [retreat], I see the Dharma Teachers getting up with their legs falling asleep just like mine. I used to think, "He's a Master Dharma Teacher, he doesn't have pain!" (laughter) "He's a Master Dharma Teacher, he can sit for hours without being bothered." But as the teachers have explained to me, they're going through the same things that I am, they've just been at it longer. That makes me respect them and look at them as role models.

Soen Sa Nim: There are other kinds of schools and their studies are different. Usually studying means following the teacher. But Zen means, never follow the teacher. If you don't, more is able to come in. Following the teacher means [following] the outside form. If you do this, you will never get enlightenment. Come inside. Always come in, again in. Breathe inside. Then understand: there is no inside, no outside.

"Older students are my teacher" is correct but if your direction is clear, not only older students but good and bad and everything is your teacher. If your direction is not clear, then even if Buddha appears, he could not be your teacher.

Jacob Perl: I'd like to mention one incident. Soen Sa Nim, maybe you remember one time we were driving to the airport and I turned to you and said, "You know many times I didn't like you." You answered, "I know that." Then I said, "But I never doubted your teaching. I never thought that I wanted another teacher or another teaching." It's true. Many things I didn't like, but I always believed in this teaching and this direction.

Berneal Williams [Head Dharma Teacher at Cambridge Zen Center]: It's so amazing that this practice works. It's usually in spite of me. I didn't know very much about Zen and I just started sitting and liked it, got addicted to it. So when I have questions about practice or whatever, I turn to people. Recently there are people that I've gotten to know pretty well and they know me pretty well, and I ask them questions when I just



Darek Gorzuwski, Lublin Zen Center

"It's very important for Zen students' direction to be clear. Why do you practice?"



Tony Sager, Providence Zen Center

want to talk with somebody I respect. I've never felt any of them put themselves up on a pedestal. They're human. They're out there and that's what makes this whole thing much more livable.

If I had someone as a teacher whom I idolized, I couldn't stand it. I've made so many mistakes by this age that I'm just full of holes and if I had a teacher way up there on a pedestal, I couldn't take it. It makes it wonderful to me that my teachers are human and loving and make mistakes, pull themselves back up and keep trying. They say the same thing to me, "Make a mistake, make correct." It makes a big difference.

But I know it's dangerous to go to SSN and say you have a problem, because you know he's going to tell you to either to do 3000 bows a day or chant Kwan Seum Bosal (laughter) and he won't tell you what to do.

Q: I wanted to ask George if he felt people were too dependent on him.

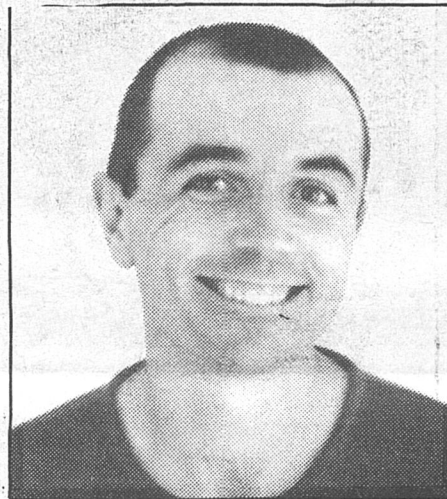
George Bowman: I don't feel that way at all. If anything, it a little bit of the opposite. This has been my life for 18 years and if

anything, my sense of interviews is that it's really a practice of sharing how things are for you in that moment. When people come to me and have a so-called interview, I always feel that I'm having an interview every bit as much as they are.

What I want to do is examine as clearly and precisely and in an unbiased way what it is that is really going on. In other words, I want to give my best self to that moment, when people come in. I hope that we meet in that way, and I think it's important. That moment is a special moment, in a sense. I would hope that people would come in with that same spirit of "Let us meet and share our practice, share that which in a sense is the best in us, or that which really wants to inquire into what's going on in this moment." That's what I think interviews are about, not so much having good answers to koans.

As far as I'm concerned, it would be wonderful practice to spend your whole life on one koan. "What is this?" (hits the table)—you could spend your whole life on that. So it's not so much an issue for me of passing lots of koans or thinking that I have an answer to them, but of coming together and examining what's going on in as clear a way as possible. Some people don't take it very seriously. Maybe I take it too seriously.

Jan Sendzimir [a Senior Dharma Teacher and founder of the Gainesville Zen Circle]: In Gainesville I invited a doctor friend of



Dennis Duermeier, Kansas Zen Center

"I'm sure if I just sat for 50 years, I could figure out all these things for myself, but it's just easier to have someone smoothing the way."

mine to a practice session and he refused to chant. He said, "I don't know what these chants are saying. Only one of them is translated into English. This might be black magic or maybe bad language. I don't want to say these things." It make be think that the chants would be more enjoyable and meaningful with a simple English translation, perhaps on a different page, that would make them less of a barrier to people. We could still chant them in Korean to make them universal but we would also be able to understand the content of the sutra.

Lincoln Rhodes: We have translations of all the chants except the Great Dharani, which is like a mantra and has no translation. Some of them are in bad shape and are not so readable. They actually cause a lot of thinking, if you read them.

Q: Especially new people when they first come to the Zen Center, they want to see the translations. We have some of the old chanting books which used to have the translations. It would be helpful when we reprint the chanting books, to include them again.

Q: It would cause no more thinking than koans do, when you first read them. It's a teaching. The sutras must be saying something good, but you don't have to be attached to it.

Soen Sa Nim: Chanting is only chanting. Only do it. In the future, maybe all will be translations. Now, it's a little difficult. The Master Dharma Teachers still need to grow up.

Richard Streitfeld [director of the Kwan Um Zen School]: What do you mean when you say that? They look very grown up to me.

Soen Sa Nim: When a Master Dharma Teacher grows up, he/she becomes a Zen Master. I've already told everybody why we are chanting Korean style. I only understand Korean style, I don't understand Japanese or Indian or American style. I still don't understand English. So how can I teach English? So, when a Master Dharma Teacher grows up, then he/she gets transmission, becomes a Zen Master, then a new school appears. Following the Kwan Um Zen School is not necessary. If you become a Zen Master, then making your school is no problem. Then, all translation is Zen Master style. I came here to the United States and this is my style, ok?



Diana Clark, Empty Gate Zen Center

So you must soon get enlightenment, become a great Zen Master. Then no problem.

Richard Streitfeld: That means there can't be much change until that happens.

Soen Sa Nim: Changing, not changing, that's Zen Master's idea. Changing is ok, not changing is ok. Already if you become a Zen Master, becoming your school is possible. That's Korean style, which means, never follow your teacher's style. In Japan, tradition is very strong. But in Korea, maybe five different Zen Masters, all different styles. Born the same, but different style teaching. Sometimes in Korea chanting styles are also different. When a great American Zen Master appears, changing everything is no problem. Transmission is no problem.

Richard Shrobe: When I first started practicing, we had these old chanting booklets with a translation, and then when we reprinted them, a decision was made not to include them. Maybe it wasn't the right decision, maybe we're reevaluating that right now, but it was a decision to leave them out because we felt people got distracted by that. Maybe it would be better to have chanting books with translations so that people could know what they're chanting and then could chant 100%.

Richard Streitfeld: The 10,000 Eyes and Hands Sutra is heavy duty, even if people really like chanting. It's very strong, very religious.

Q: It would be distracting if we put the translations side by side. Perhaps we could put them in back of the chanting book.

Q: It seems to me that we set things up so that all the Master Dharma Teachers and Zen centers do have to follow a style, and it's a wonderful style. But in some ways it does seem to foster a fear of being different, creative and original. Maybe Zen is not about being different, creative and original. I find the chants difficult. I've spent two years trying to figure out how to chant them and I still have trouble.

There's a therapeutic tradition of finding your own sound. What do you think about that? I think a lot of people have a certain fear of healing themselves. I experience that myself. I think Korean chanting fosters a certain sterility, a fear of being creative.

Lincoln Rhodes: All the things you said about finding your own sound and being creative and wonderful, and there's plenty of places that encourage you to do that and

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that's their teaching. But there's one part of Zen teaching that isn't exactly the same as that. I'll give you an exaggeration. You could pick a completely different form, where you get up at 8 o'clock and watch TV for two hours, then go out and water ski for an hour, then jog for 45 minutes, then you shout. You could pick a form and a schedule, exactly the one that you like and then do it every day, year in, year out. You would get sick of all kinds of parts of it and want new and creative things, so it would be wonderful.

But the part of this training that's different from that is to pick something and just do it, then watch. See your mind. Some days it likes it, some days it doesn't. Some days it wants to be somewhere else, or asleep. Some days it's boring, some days it's incredible. See this mind, ok? If we keep changing [our schedule] every time our mind changes, we don't see that. That's the point of using some technique, some form, as a tool. The form isn't magic or special. People aren't afraid of changing [the form], it's just [about] using the form.

Soen Sa Nim: An eminent teacher once said, "At the end of this world, demon is strong, Dharma very weak." So demon mind and Dharma mind, two minds. Now they are the same strength. Only if you have a try-mind will demon mind be weak. If you have no try-mind, the demon mind will control the Dharma mind. So for a student, having a try-mind is very important. Mistake, doesn't matter. Only make correct. Try, try, try. If you always have a try-mind, then the demon mind cannot work. The moment try-mind disappears, soon this demon will appear. So an eminent teacher said, "Always try." That's very important nowadays.

2,000 or 3,000 years ago there weren't as many human beings. I often talk about this. Now there are almost 5 billion people. Where does all this new consciousness come from? There are too many human beings. In Buddhism we talk about samsara. Human beings are bad animals. They kill many fish and animals. Then these fish and animals become human beings. Human beings become animals. This is samsara.

One person kills many animals, so many animals become human beings. More and more human beings appear. Their outside form is human, but their consciousness is animal. Everyone has some animal consciousness, but how much? 80%? 90%? How much is human, has human nature? So if you have no try-mind, this animal consciousness pushes away human consciousness. Now much human being action is animal action—"only me, only me, only me." "Only me" means like and dislike mind is very strong. Taking away like and dislike mind means taking away animal mind, then human nature will appear. Human nature means love, compassion and equality, peace mind. So if you are Zen student, have a try-mind. Come here, practice, that's wonderful.

If you see this society, you see that people in their whole life never think "What am I?" All the time, they wake up, desire, anger, then sleep. Again wake up, want something, attached to something, for their whole life. Many people live like this, all the time in their like-dislike mind. That's animal mind. How is animal mind and human mind different?

So having a try-mind is very important. Lazy mind appears, then soon we try again. Desire mind appears, then soon try-mind. Anger mind appears, soon try-mind. Then anger and desire minds will rest, rest, rest. Like and dislike mind will go down, down,

down. Then your center will become strong and everything will be no problem. That's all.

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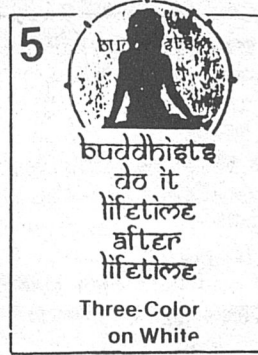
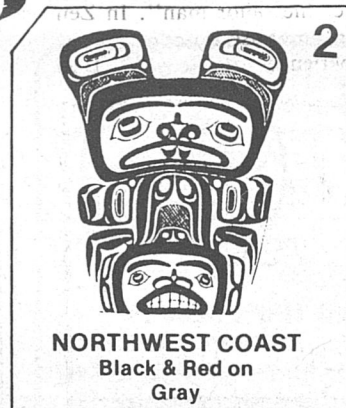
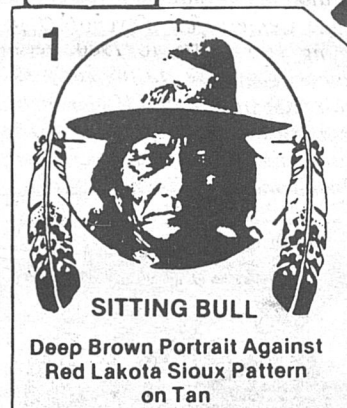
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Children's skit for Soen Sa Nim's birthday

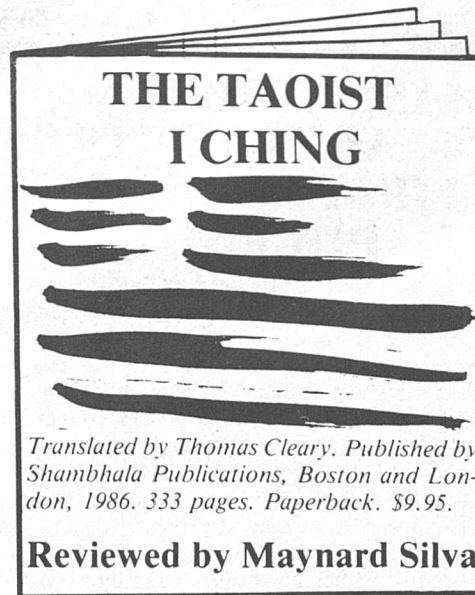
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First, a multiple choice question:
The I Ching is:

- a) a Chinese Ouija board
- b) Confucius' diary
- c) Three coins in a fountain
- d) chopped tofu

Now, true or false: I'd really like to read a three hundred page book that could help me relate my practice to daily life.

No matter what you chose on the first question, the second question applies here.

The Book of Changes is a document of great depth and wide scope, one that has proven the timelessness of its value. It has already reached into Western culture in a subtle way. Thomas Cleary's work with the I Ching is a solid addition to the Book of Changes' western foray.

There are two obstacles which any work of Oriental philosophy confronts when introduced to Westerners. First, of course, is language. Secondly, there is commercialism. The I Ching has suffered from both, mutating into various bastardizations such as "The I Ching Coloring Book" and the "I Ching Guide to Romance." Fortunately, Cleary's new book takes a new approach which neatly surmounts both obstacles.

Instead of retranslating yet again the same texts, or plagiarizing the most common translations, this book focuses on the work of one comparatively recent Taoist Adept. The result is a freshness and vitality that I, personally, haven't experienced since my first introduction. Liu I-Ming was a Taoist teacher versed in Buddhism and Confucianism. He wrote his I Ching in 1796, "as a guide to comprehensive self-realization while living an ordinary life in the world." The language of the book is clear, stripped of any hocus-pocus, yet without becoming abbreviated or watered down.

The other major difference is the downplay of divination. This is a book, not a Ouija board. It is a guide to understanding and living in this world, to be studied and applied.

In short, here is a serious attempt to make the I Ching available as a part of a practice. It is a good introduction to the newcomer and a worthwhile acquisition for those of us with other translations. □



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