

PRIMARY POINT

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"THE WHOLE WORLD IS A SINGLE FLOWER"-In late August 80 students from the U.S. and Europe gathered in Korea to celebrate Zen Master Seung Sahn's 60th birthday, an important milestone in Korean culture. The gathering included a two-day event at Su Dok Sa Temple, talks by visiting dignitaries Ven. Mahaghosananda, Maezumi Roshi, Jakusho Kwong Roshi, and Ji Kwang Poep Sa Nim, and a kido in a building under construction for future international Kyol Che s (meditation retreats). Several days later over 2000 laypeople, monks and nuns gathered at the Hyatt Hotel in downtown Seoul to meet at the International Young Buddhists Symposium. As flags of many countries decorated the stage, people

representing these countries came up to express their understanding of the phrase, "The Whole World Is A Single Flower". In the evening there was a celebration of the publication in Korean of a major biography of Zen Master Seung Sahn, some 700 pages long and containing many photographs. The Kwan Um Zen School presented gifts, a hand-sewn quilt and a carved plaque. Following the ceremonies, about 70 people went on a week-long tour of major Korean Buddhist temples, a trip made special by their extraordinary warmth and hospitality. The February 1988 issue of PRIMARY POINT will include a full report and photographs of these events.

Photo by Paul Best

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By Master Dharma Teacher Robert Moore

In December 1986 in a ceremony at the Providence Zen Center, Robert Moore was recognized by Zen Master Seung Sahn as a Master Dharma Teacher in the Kwan Um Zen School. Bob is the seventh American Zen student to be named as an MDT, which is equivalent to "sensei" in the Japanese tradition. Following the Certification Assembly, it is traditional for the new teacher to give a formal Dharma speech.

Bob, a Texas-born composer and martial arts teacher, has been a student of Soen Sa Nim's for 12 years. Married and the father of three children, he teaches music at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles and is a Tai Chi instructor at the Aikido Ai Dojo in Whittier, where he leads a Zen group. He is also the resident teacher at Dharma Sah Zen Center in Los Angeles. A former music professor at Yale and Oberlin, he was a co-founder of the New Haven Zen Center.

(Bob holds the ceremonial Zen stick above his head, and then brings it down for a hard hit on the altar table in front of him)

About one thousand years ago a monk came to Tung Sahn Shou-Ch'u Zen Master and asked, what is Buddha? Tung Sahn replied, three pounds of flax. (Bob hits the table a second time)

A few decades earlier a monk approached Yun Men Zen Master, who was Tung Sahn's teacher, and asked, what is Buddha? Yun Men replied, dry shit on a stick. (Bob hits the table a third time)

Tung Sahn Zen Master said, three pounds of flax. Yun Men Zen Master said, dry shit on a stick. So I ask you, what is the real Buddha?

(loud shout) Hoh!

I see before me many smiling faces.

Twelve and a half years ago three of us made a trip here to Providence from New Haven to talk with a monk who wished to

introduce us to Soen Sa Nim. We invited Soen Sa Nim to give a talk at Yale University that fall. After becoming acquainted with Soen Sa Nim, through shenanigans of one sort or another which I never totally understood, we then decided to take the Five Precepts. [first five lay precepts of Buddhism] It was exactly 12 years ago tonight that the five original New Haven students came here. We drew straws to see who would give the Dharma talk from our group (in those days there were only about four Zen Centers), and I got the short straw.

I'm used to lecturing, so I worked very hard and had a 30-minute talk all prepared, with a long story to tell. In those days Soen Sa Nim used a mokat [wooden clapper] for signaling the end of your talk time. I got up to give my talk, started in and got about two minutes into it when—tok! So I

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DYING AND WORLD PEACE

The Conference on "Conscious Living, Conscious Dying"

By Sid Kemp

Stephen Levine (SL): A fellow has a heart attack, a heart fibrillation. His friends reach out to him in fear. Touching his moment in conflict, they say urgently, "What should we do, what should we do?"

He answers, "No problem. My heart is only singing." This is a diseased heart. But this is a healed heart, if ever I've seen one. No conflict. Having a heart attack, I stop the war.

Soen Sa Nim (SSN): When your mind is like clear water, that's Zen mind. Good thinking, then good mind. Suffering, then plain mind. Thinking appears, then your mind is changing. No thinking, then no mind. Then your mind, my mind, Buddha mind, Christ mind are all the same clear Zen mind.

A thousand years ago, there was a famous Zen temple on Diamond Mountain, in Korea. On a nearby mountain there was a sutra temple called Mu Jeung-Sa. Five

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thought I would finish that talk tonight. (laughter) I'm finally going to tell my story.

This is my favorite Zen folk tale. It's about Chi Ch'ang, the greatest archer in China, or who wanted to be the greatest archer in China. I've practiced martial arts most of my life, so I understand this kind of energy. He was a very great archer, but he heard that there were people in the country even greater than he was. He heard there was a teacher in Han Tan Province, so he packed up his wife and they travelled about 500 miles. He wanted to study with a teacher named Wei Fei.

Chi Ch'ang went to see Wei Fei and said, "I'm a great archer, but I hear that you're the greatest archer in all of China, so please teach me." Wei Fei said, "If you want to become a great archer, first you must learn not to blink. Come back and see me when you can't blink anymore."

Chi Ch'ang went home and lay down next to his wife's sewing machine, and put his eyeball right next to the treadle going up and down—diddle, diddle, diddle, diddle.

"What I had enjoyed most in life was sitting around with other professors in tweed coats with leather patches on the sleeves... and talking about American transcendentalism and Zen."

He watched this thing all day, every day, for two years until he didn't blink at all. The legend says that he got to the point where he could hold his eyes open so long that a spider actually put a web between his eyelids.

He went back to see the teacher, and said, "Master, now I don't blink." Wei Fei said, "Oh, very good. Now you must learn how to look."

Chi Ch'ang went home again and decided what to do. He found the tiniest insect and put it on a leaf and had his servant put it on the window at the back of the Dharma hall. Year after year he sat and stared at it. Finally the tiniest insect began to look as big as a beetle, then as big as a frog, and finally as big as a horse. So he could really look.

He went back to his teacher and said, "Now I know how to look." Wei Fei said, "Okay, let's see what you can do." Wei Fei's skills were well known. Supposedly he could shoot at a willow leaf a hundred yards away and put five arrows through it. So Chi Ch'ang stood up and shot five arrows straight through the willow leaf. Wei Fei bowed very deeply and said, "Yes, indeed, you are a very great archer."

Chi Ch'ang was satisfied. He went home, feeling very good. But that night he started thinking. "I wonder if I'm as good as my teacher. The problem is, I know I'm good, but I wonder if I'm as good as he is." In his mind he was asking, who is better?

About two days later he was walking down the road and saw his teacher walking on the other side. They both had bow and arrows. Suddenly Chi Ch'ang took up his bow and shot at his teacher. His teacher saw what was happening and took up his bow and shot back. The two arrows hit in mid-air. Back and forth they shot, until only Chi Ch'ang had an arrow left. He aimed it straight at his teacher's heart. The teacher reached behind himself and grabbed a thorn bush and deflected the arrow as it came by. Then the two men embraced. (laughs) Things were different in those days.

But Wei Fei knew he had a problem. He had to get Chi Ch'ang out of town as fast as possible. So he told him, "You know, I'm not really the best archer, but there's a great, great archer in Tibet on Mount Ho that you must now go study with. He lives way up in the mountains, and you must find him. His name is Kan Ying."

Chi Ch'ang took the long journey, traveling over a thousand miles. It was said by the time he reached the top of the mountain, his ankles were bruised and his legs were all bloody. He finally reached the top of the mountain and went into a cave where he saw an old man, older than anybody he had ever seen before. It was almost frightening how the old man looked: he had long white hair that hung all the way down to his heels. He looked maybe 200 years old.

But Chi Ch'ang was still very brash and he said, "I've come to see if you're a greater archer than I am." At that moment he turned and saw a bird high up in the sky over the mountain. He took up his bow and arrow and shot the bird, and the bird fell.

With very gentle eyes, the old man looked up at him and said, "I see you're still using a bow and arrow." Chi Ch'ang looked puzzled. The old man motioned to him to follow, and they climbed around and up to the very top of the mountain, and went out on a ledge. Chi Ch'ang's knees were beginning to shake a little, because he could look straight down and see that it was thousands of feet down. A rock fell and went plummeting down. Suddenly he was absolutely gripped with fear. He crawled back down the ledge and held onto a large rock.

The old man laughed and went up on the ledge. Way up high there was a bird you could barely see. The old man pointed his finger and the bird came dropping way down and lighted on his hand. Then the old man gave a little lift and the bird flew off. The old man reached down to Chi Ch'ang and said, "Come up on the ledge with me now and I will teach you."

Nobody heard anything about Chi

Ch'ang for almost 20 years. He had disappeared. Twenty years later he came down out of the mountains, but everyone noticed when he returned home that he was very different. Whereas before he was always talking, "I, I, I—I want this"—he never talked about himself when he came back. And the funniest thing, even though everybody assumed he was now the greatest archer in the world and they hailed him as the great master, no one actually saw him shoot a bow and arrow. Because he didn't shoot, the legends grew bigger.

It was said that birds wouldn't fly over his house, they would go around it. It was said that a burglar tried to break into the house one night and a force blew him off the window, and so on. Chi Ch'ang's reputation got bigger and everybody thought of him as a great man. He lived to be about 85 years old.

In the last year of his life, he went to the house of one of his nephews, a man who had taken up the art and science of archery, like his uncle. The nephew had his bow and arrows on the table. When Chi Ch'ang walked in, he went over to the table and picked up an arrow. Turning to his nephew, he said, "what is this?"

The nephew said, "Oh uncle, you know. Quit putting me on." Chi Ch'ang said, "No, what is this?" Then the nephew realized that Chi Ch'ang no longer even knew what the bow and arrow were.

After Chi Ch'ang died, it was said that for one month people put their tools away—the carpenters put their rules away, the poets put their pens away, the musicians broke the strings on their instruments—in homage to this great man, who understood so deeply what it meant to be a great archer that he no longer even knew what the bow and arrow meant.

So that's an interesting story.

This is a big day for me, in many ways. I've never been to one of these Certification Assemblies before. I remember when Soen Sa Nim announced that Bobby [Rhodes] and George [Bowman] were going to become Master Dharma Teachers, it was just before I moved out to California. They both got up and gave talks, saying the ice cream still tastes the same and all that, but we all thought that this event was very high class, and that they were now different from us. I think one is not ready to even begin thinking about being involved in one of these ceremonies until he or she becomes completely non-attached to the idea that it means anything special.

My life has been very interesting, particularly in the last seven or eight years. I was born into a very poor family and my parents always felt that they had been held back by lack of education, so the idea of education was very important. When I was growing up, I always did well in school. Then I got a PhD, taught at Oberlin College (which is probably the best undergraduate

school of music in the country) and went to teach at Yale. Everything was sort of idyllic, in many ways.

I met Soen Sa Nim during those years at Yale. What I had enjoyed most in life was sitting around with other professors in tweed coats with leather patches on the sleeves, all that, and talking about American transcendentalism and Zen. That's the sort of life I had. I could have stayed longer at Yale, but they don't give any kind of permanent tenure at Yale in my field, so it was time to move on.

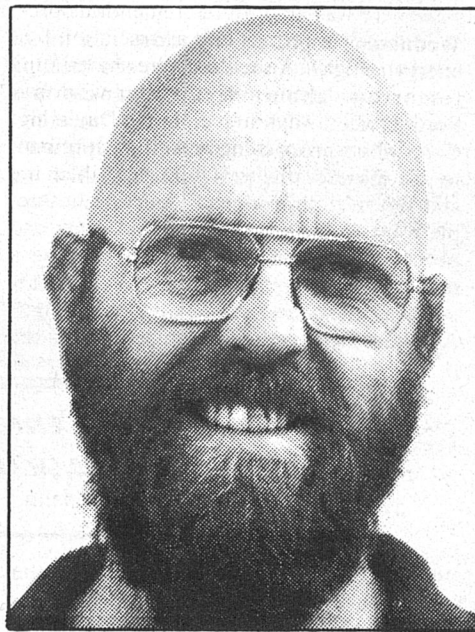
I went to talk to Soen Sa Nim. I told him I had these job offers at such and such places, and also at Los Angeles. Soen Sa Nim said, "Ah, Los Angeles—good! Tahl Mah Sah [then a fledgling Zen Center] needs help." I thought about it and said, "That's a good idea. I'll go to Los Angeles and help Tahl Mah Sah." So I moved to Los Angeles.

Los Angeles is a very interesting place. It is not for nothing that the World Wrestling Federation and Joan Rivers are located in Los Angeles. It's a very interesting culture. So my wife and I arrived and the first thing that we discovered was that the only place we could afford to live was about 35 miles away from the Zen Center. Always before, we had lived next door to the Zen Center, and every morning I'd go to practice, and so forth.

For the first six weeks or so that we were there, I tried to adapt to that [distance], then I got angry about the situation. My wife was pregnant with our second baby. It was a very bad time. We hated California, we didn't like anything about the situation. This was kind of a down period in my life.

I had been practicing about six years with Soen Sa Nim at that time, and I was thinking, "That son of a bitch, he got me to come out here and I'm miserable." So I quit going to Tahl Mah Sah for something like six months, that was late 1979, early 1980.

Soen Sa Nim came through town and called me on the telephone. "It's necessary for you to come give a Dharma speech," he said. "I don't know, Soen Sa Nim," I said. "I haven't been practicing." He said, "No, it's necessary for you to come give a Dharma speech." So I went to Tahl Mah Sah and went through the motions of giving a Dharma talk. Soen Sa Nim was there, and I'll always be eternally grateful to him. It's interesting, because we've never had a really close relationship in terms of small talk, but somehow he perceived the situation. It was one of those important moments in my life



"Many of us have come through our practice to these moments when it's a crisis state."

and practice.

After I'd given my talk, he told a story about Chao Chou. You know, Chao Chou trained under Nam Ch'uan and had some sort of understanding when he was 17 years old. But he stayed with Nam Ch'uan until he was 60, refining, refining. When Nam Ch'uan died, Chao Chou decided he would go out and test himself. So he traveled for 20 years all over China. All he did was engage in Dharma combat. He would go to a temple, go up to the Master sitting at the front of the dais and challenge him. He could beat everyone, so they were all terrified of him. (It's similar to the stories about Laynan Pang.) He rode his own

mule, and it got to the point when he was approaching a temple, the monks would see him coming and run to tell their Zen Master. "Oh, oh, here he comes, you better watch out!"

Finally he got to Chao Chou Mountain. The monks ran in and told the Zen Master, "Here comes this guy who's been causing all the trouble." Chao Chou came into the temple and went up to the old Zen Master. The Zen Master, Chu Yu, looked at him and bowed. "Who are you?"

"I am Ts'ung Shen (Chao Chou's given name)."

"Where do you come from?"

Chao Chou said, "I have no home. I travel all over, testing everybody."

The old monk looked at him and said, "You have so many years on your head and you still have no home?"

Chao Chou said, "I've been riding a mule all over China for the last 20 years, but today I got kicked by an old ass."

Soen Sa Nim told this story, and suddenly I realized, *this is my home*. That night I said, okay, tomorrow morning and every morning, 35 miles to Tahl Mah Sah. Maybe I'll live here one year, five years, 50 years, but whatever, this is my home. That was me, getting back up on the ledge.

That's the main point I have. The thing I miss most about being here [on the East Coast] is looking out and seeing a lot of faces that I know and feeling lonesome. But, some faces that started with me in New Haven many years ago are missing. Many of us have come through our practice to those moments where it's a crisis state. You either get back on the ledge with the archer, or you don't. I want to urge all of you who have this wonderful opportunity, living in Zen Centers and so forth, to really take advantage of that because many of you won't be in this situation all of your lives.

What happened to me was that I was able to practice, practice, practice—then my body got very weak after a while and I wasn't able to do all of that training anymore. But the momentum of my practice allowed me to build a zendo in my home, and continue. Very soon after that, a new group appeared for me to teach and lead at a dojo close to my home. I've been doing that now for a couple of years and I have 12 or 14 students who sit with me all the time.

Many opportunities will appear out of making this commitment, just to make this your home, right where you are at this moment.

I alluded to the fact that California is an interesting place and since this is Enlightenment Day, everyone has been talking about stars. [Buddha saw the morning star and got enlightenment.] Well, in California there's a radio station that sells stars. It's a good business, low overhead. You send the radio station \$100 and they sell you a star. They send you a certificate with your name on a star, and a chart. Your star is in the heavens.

One of my favorite stories about Soen Sa Nim comes from Linc [Rhodes]. He said back in the early days he and Soen Sa Nim were walking, and he was a little bit ashamed of the funky Zen Center they had and he was sort of apologizing to Soen Sa Nim. Soen Sa Nim laughed and said, "But the whole world is my home. Why worry about these things?"

So I hit you, Soen Sa Nim. Not only is the whole earth our home, but the *whole cosmos* is already our home. The stars already belong to everyone. It's not necessary to send a \$100 to California. The stars are already ours.

Before (he holds the Zen stick above his head, then hits the table hard) I said, if you don't practice, if you don't get back on the ledge, if you don't try, then what? You and the cosmos are different, okay? No enlightenment. (Hits table a second time) So! Find your home, practice every day. Keep "don't-know" mind. Then you and the cosmos and all the stars become one. This is enlightenment mind. (Hits table a third time)

Ignorance mind, enlightenment mind, which do you want? I say they are both rotten. Why?

(loud shout) Hoh!

The stars are shining brightly in the cold winter night.

Thank you. □