

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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YOU ARE ALREADY HOME

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 moktak [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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CONSCIOUS LIVING, CONSCIOUS DYING

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hundred monks lived at the Zen temple. Between the two, there was a wonderful hot spring with hot tubs. All Korea was Buddhist then, so Zen monks and sutra monks could all come for free. So the monks were very happy.

One day, the most famous sutra monk in Korea came from Mu Jeung-Sa to the baths. This monk already had a problem: "I am a sutra monk. I have authentic Buddha-speech and Buddha-action." One day, he comes down to take a hot bath. It was a very good feeling, very clear. So, when he is ready to leave, he goes to the woman who runs the baths, and says, "Oh, thank you very much. Your hot tub is very wonderful, the best in the world."

The owner said, "Thank you very much."

"Nowadays, do many monks come in here?"

"Yes, both Zen monks and sutra monks come here. Do you meditate?"

"Yes, we meditate at the sutra temple. We also study sutras and have dharma combat."

Then the woman said, "Master, I have question."

"What kind of question do you have?"

"I want to understand the dharma."

"Okay. Any kind of question, ask me." (I am a sutra master.)

"Okay, my question is: You just took a hot bath, so your body is very clean. You clean your body in the hot tub. Where do you clean your mind?"

That's the point. Your body is cleaned in the hot tub. Where do you clean your mind? If you clean your mind, then no problem. Every day you use your mind, thinking: "I like that. I don't like that. Here is good. Here is bad. I go over there. Oh wonderful. I'm not so good." You use your mind, and your mind becomes dirty. So, my question is: You all clean your bodies in the shower every day. How do you clean your mind every day?

Don't know?

If you don't have a mind, cleaning it is not necessary. But if you have a mind, you must clean it! How do you clean your mind?

If you are always checking, checking, checking, you have a problem. Don't check, just do it. If you just do it, then there is no subject, no object; no appearance or disappearance; no good or bad; no high or low; no inside, no outside. Outside and inside become one.

A long time ago, when someone asked Joju Zen Master a question, he would always answer, "Go drink tea." They asked many kinds of questions: "What is Buddha?" "What is the True Way?" "What is Correct Life?" Joju would only reply, "Go drink tea." Go drink tea is correct action, it is everything: Correct Way, Correct Truth, Correct Life. Go drink tea is "Just do it." Don't check. Don't make your mind. Don't make I/my/me. Don't make life and death. Don't make anything. Just do it. Just drink tea. That is the Zen way.

What is Zen? What is Buddhism? What is the correct way, truth, and correct life? There are many words, many speeches about these things. Sometimes speech is important, but sometimes it is a big mistake. So if you are attached to speech, you always have a problem. If your speech has correct function, then there's no problem. Correct speech is very important and will help you, your parents, your country, and all beings. So speech is very important.

Open your mouth, already a mistake. If you close your mouth, then when you see, when you hear, when you smell, everything is truth. Then everything is the correct way and correct life. So, silence is better than holiness. If you have silence, then you attain everything.

What is silence, what is emptiness? Just understanding cannot help you. You must attain silence, stillness, nothingness. Then you will attain everything.

So everyone, only "What am I? Don't know." If you keep this don't-know mind 100%, then already thinking is cut off, there is no thinking. No thinking means empty mind. Empty mind is before think-

Conference with Zen Master Seung Sahn and Stephen Levine

In late June 1987, some 130 people gathered at the Providence Zen Center for a conference entitled "Conscious Living, Conscious Dying" led by Zen Master Seung Sahn and Stephen Levine, nationally known author of "Who Dies?" The two teachers had never met before, but were quickly as affectionate towards each other as two brothers. Together they wove a tapestry that helped the participants explore their beliefs and attitudes about dying. They also introduced forms of meditation and relaxation that are oriented towards helping us release tension and simply be present, moment to moment. Stephen Levine was particularly helpful in introducing Zen Master Seung Sahn and the meaning of his practice and teaching to those who had not met him before. Some of the participants had recent experiences or jobs which brought the issue of death to the foreground of their lives, but the conference went far beyond those particulars to look at not only how we die and face death, but also how we live and how we can be more aware in the world.

Zen Master Seung Sahn is the 78th Patriarch of the Korean Chogye Order and first Korean Zen Master to live and teach in the West. Since coming to the United States in 1972, he has founded the Providence Zen Center and over 50 affiliated groups and centers in the U.S., Canada, Brazil, Europe and Korea, which comprise the Kwan Um Zen School. He travels worldwide teaching Zen, and bringing people together for international peace work.

Stephen Levine is a father, poet, and teacher nationally known for his work with the terminally ill. He has worked extensively with Elisabeth Kubler-Ross and Ram Dass. With his wife, Ondrea, he leads retreats and consults with a number of hospital, hospice and meditation groups in the U.S. and Canada.

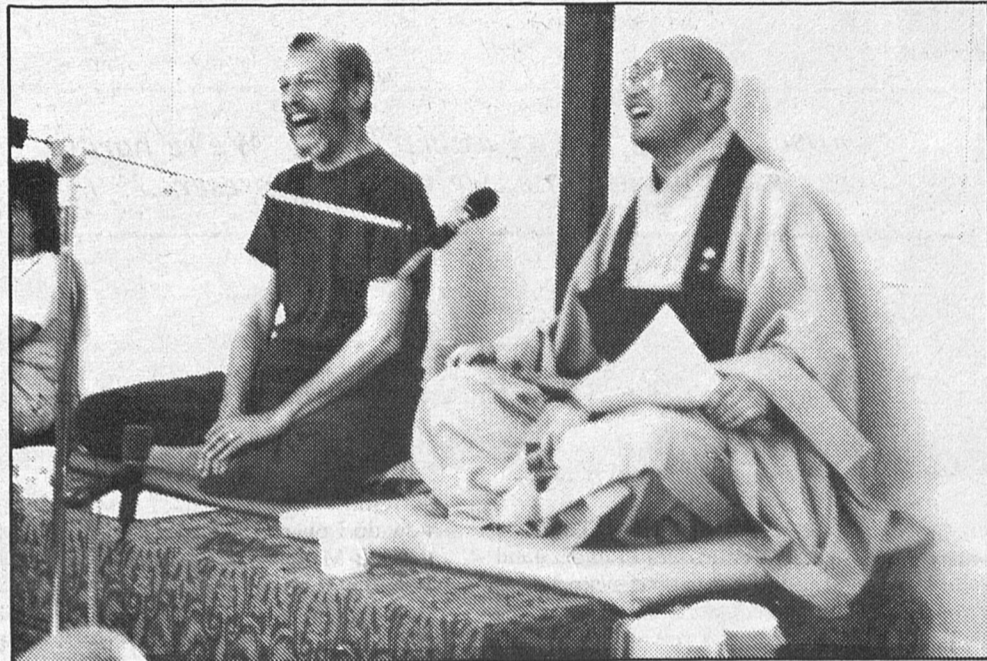


Photo by Do Haeng Sunin

ing. No thinking is clear like space. That is substance: clear like space means clear like a mirror. Red comes, red. White comes, white. The sky is blue, the trees are green. A dog barking, woof, woof. Sugar is sweet. All, just like this, is the truth. This becomes yours. If you only understand "sky is blue," you have a problem. "Sky is blue" must become yours. "Tree is green" must become yours. "Dog barking" must become yours. At that time, you will get enlightenment and understanding of the correct way, truth, correct life.

weren't drinking the tea in our minds before it was ready? Where we weren't impatiently doing five things at the same time? Conflict is generated in the mind. Waiting, imagining, you drink that cup of tea ten times in the mind before it ever touches the tip of your tongue. That is conflict, that is war. You are not in the moment; you are elsewhere. In the mind. In suffering. If you are in the mind, you are in war. If you are in the mind, you are only partially born.

Imagine just making a cup of tea. It's almost too much to imagine. Imagine just no-

"My" sadness is only my opinion making me sad. But when someone sees suffering and says, "That's very sad," then that is Bodhisattva sadness.

SL: When there was war in Soen Sa Nim's homeland of Korea, thirty some-odd years ago, Paul Reps (author of ZEN FLESH, ZEN BONES), wanted to do some intensive meditation practice in Japan. But at the time, Japan was being used as a staging ground for the war in Korea, and the Japanese government wouldn't let non-military personnel come in. Paul Reps was in Australia (I think), and he wanted to go to Kyoto to sit Zen. The Japanese immigration officer in Australia, where Reps was asking for the visa, said, "I'm sorry, you can't come into Japan. There's a war on." Reps turned over the questionnaire for the visa, and on the back of it he wrote, "Making a cup of green tea, I stop the war."

The immigration officer looked at that poem, and read it once or twice, and then he turned over the paper and signed the visa application. He said, "We need more people like you in our country."

It sounds great: "Making a cup of green tea, I stop the war." It would make a great bumper sticker. But what does it mean to make a cup of green tea that stops the war?

I mean, have we ever made a cup of green tea that didn't continue the war? Where we

ting desire in the mind: "Ah, I'd like a cup of tea." Just noticing the vision. Already that cup of tea is steaming in the mind, before you even touch the cold water faucet.

Not forcing it, just doing it, just making a cup of tea. Just walking over and selecting a tea. Just turning on the water faucet. Feeling the cold of the water faucet. Maybe there's condensation on it. Feeling that. Just being there. Just this millisecond, completely real. Everything else is a dream. Everything else is war. Everything else is conflict. Everything else is not now, not here. Not where truth is to be found; not where healing is received.

Imagine feeling the pot slowly filling with water. Notice the feeling of the muscles in the arm as it has to tighten, ever so slightly to increase its support as the pot gets heavier.

Reaching up, feeling the muscles. Feeling the hand extend to turn off the water faucet. Feeling it come back, just this much. Walking across the floor, sensations are generated in the feet. Expectation maybe, is in the mind. Over to the stove. You hear the pop of the gas, perhaps, as it ignites. You

may even notice the curl of the heat around the kettle that touches the hand. You may notice as millisecond of that fear of being burned. But it's all in a flow, one thing after another. That is "Just doing it."

To "just do it" is to do that thing only, to live completely a breath at a time, to be wholly present in the present.

The hand retracts from the pot. Feel the muscles as they contract and expand. Feeling the sensation of this moment, in this body, making a cup of tea. Not waiting for the tea to boil; just making a cup of tea. Sitting down, feeling your buttocks on the chair, your feet on the floor, your arm on the table. Just sitting. Not someone in a room, in a male or female body, waiting for a cup of camomile or jasmine. Just being experienced, unfolding from moment to moment. You can hear the bubbles starting to form in the kettle. Maybe you can smell the water as it just begins to boil. All there is, all there ever will be, is here, moment to moment. No conflict, no waiting, just being. You hear the tea. Ah, a moment of satisfaction.

Standing, noticing before you stand, the intention to stand. What a miracle! Not drawn, not driven, not automatic, not compulsive, not mechanical. Noticing that the mind produces intention before every action. What an exquisite opportunity to unlock the ancient compulsivity, to take conscious birth, at last; instead of compulsively falling through our lives. Hand touches the kettle. Ah, the heat. The feeling of weight. Feeling it. Feeling it. The muscles doing their job. A miracle of body, of mind, of heart. Walking back to the table, hearing sound of your feet on the floor, feeling life, feet on the floor. The pot in hand. Water pouring. The fragrance, that first millisecond of the fragrance of the tea as it touches your nostril. And the rush of conditioning that meets it, liking, disliking, expectation, happiness, unhappiness. Your whole life is in that millisecond. Just do it. Each moment. One thing at a time.

Whisk in the cup. That whisk—whip, whip, whip, whip—against the side of the cup. Not listening to the radio. Not dreaming of television; not five years old in your backyard. Just—whip, whip, whip, whip, whip, whip. Sitting down. Drinking that cup of tea. Feeling the heat on your fingers as you pick it up. The first moment, even before it touches your lips, when you can feel the warmth, when the fragrance is there. Notice how the mind reaches out through the nose and tongue to drink that cup of tea before it can even touch it.

Just a cup of tea. No war, no conflict, no struggle, no intensifying suffering. Just presence receiving tea.

We were sharing this image at a conference similar to this one, and, during a break as I was walking up an aisle toward the back of the room, a fellow with a walker to support weak legs came laboriously towards me. He had a very frail body. He weighed perhaps ninety pounds. He was obviously quite ill. As we came face to face, he looked up at me, and said, "Dying of cancer, I stop the war."

Just dying. No conflict in him. No problem. Just doing it, no problem. It wasn't that he hadn't had problems. It wasn't that he wasn't frightened when he was told he had cancer. It wasn't that there had not been resistance meeting his pain, but that there was such a willingness to be present, such a willingness to be alive, such a willingness to let go of his suffering.

Letting go of our suffering is the hardest work we will ever do. The work of at least a lifetime.

This fellow was so willing not to suffer that he met each moment like that cup of tea. Moment to moment, process. Not lost in conflict. He was like space. He was translucent. "Dying of cancer, I stop the war." There was no conflict in him. There was no problem for him. When he died, his last breath just left. He didn't grasp for the next breath. It went out, and he went with it.

No problem. No conflict. No one dying.

FIRST QUESTIONER: I have difficulty connecting the inner work toward becoming peaceful as an individual and the work on the larger level, for world peace. I don't quite see the connection or the movement from one to the other.

SL: It isn't the people that make war, it's the state of mind. It's greed, it's fear, it's anger, it's distrust. How can we end the war when these are still within us? Internal work may seem like it's not enough. But that's the "not enough" mind speaking, just do it, and then see what happens. See how much more intuitive you are. See how much more present you are. What ends war? Going beyond the conflicted mind and opening into your heart. Compassion ends war. Caring ends war.

People marched with peace signs in the sixties. "Stop burning the children in the jungles of Vietnam." That was a good intention, wanting the end of suffering. But did they stop the war in the name of peace?

Fifty-three thousand American men and women were killed in Vietnam during the Vietnam War. A few hundred thousand men and women returned. Many were met by people with peace signs who spit on them, who called them baby killers, who reviled them. These people held signs saying, "Make Peace, Not War," but they burned the hearts of those men and women coming back from Hell.

Fifty-three thousand were killed on the battlefields of Vietnam, but if the figures I have seen are accurate, more than seventy-five thousand veterans have committed suicide in America. Seventy-five thousand killed themselves. Were they met by peace? The word "peace" is nothing if there is anger in the mind.

I don't know how we can make peace until we can just make a cup of tea, and meet the conflict and the confusion within ourselves with mercy. Without the heart-centered peace, without the lack of conflict within, it is impossible to stop the war. The



By Ellen Anthony

The weekend of "Conscious Living/Conscious Dying" with Stephen Levine and Soen Sa Nim (Zen Master Seung Sahn) was very special. I am not used to sitting still on a cushion and just listening for two days, but one hundred and thirty of us did just that.

"Pain is not suffering. Resistance to pain is suffering. In these next days maybe we can open to our own pain...touch with mercy and kindness that which has been touched with fear," Stephen said.

"Some day we are all dying...Nobody guarantees your life. So moment to moment you die," said Soen Sa Nim.

Much of the time, Stephen and Soen Sa Nim were in dialogue with each other and with us, back and forth, telling stories, joking listening to our stories, sharing their spirit in the large meditation hall.

When Soen Sa Nim introduced Stephen as the more famous one, Stephen laughed warmly and said, "I had the feeling about Soen Sa Nim that I was about to be with an

mind reaches out, says "Give me a solution," but the mind is the problem.

FIRST QUESTIONER: I'm not happy with your answer.

SL: The mind is not happy with not getting what it wants. The mind is at war.

SSN: I only ask you: What are you doing now?

FIRST QUESTIONER: I am feeling sad, now.

SSN: Sad. What kind of sad?

FIRST QUESTIONER: Because I did not get the answer I was looking for.

SSN: Sad is part of it, it is your feeling. What are you doing, what is your body position, and how are you feeling.

FIRST QUESTIONER: I am sitting here, feeling sad.

SSN: All right. Just do it. If you're sad 100%, then there is no "I." When you asked your question, you said "I" feel this way, and "I" don't see that. This "I" has a problem. The "I" makes my opinion, my condition, my situation. If you put down your opinion, your condition, and your situation, then everything is no problem. Where does sadness appear?

FIRST QUESTIONER: I don't know.

SSN: You are holding "my opinion, my understanding." If you have too much understanding, then you have a problem. You must digest your understanding, then wisdom appears. Then with wisdom, if this sadness appears, that is love and compassion. Not "my" sadness, not that "my"

"Most of our life is an afterthought. We're hardly here, we're hardly one, we're hardly present."

feeling.

There are two kinds of sadness. "My" sadness is only my opinion making me sad. But when someone sees suffering and says, "That's very sad," then that is Bodhisattva sadness. Keeping your direction clear every day is very important. If "help all beings" is your direction, then, and feeling—happiness, suffering, sadness—any feeling is no problem.

Once a mother had a child. That child was very sick. The child doesn't understand anything, doesn't understand sickness. So the mother understands more than the child. Soon the child is very sick, the child may die. At that time, the mother doesn't think of anything, she just takes care of her child. That mind is a very important mind. There is no life and death, no happiness or sadness. Only take care of it, only do it. If you keep this mind all the time, then moment to moment everything becomes correct.

SECOND QUESTIONER: I get confused between the idea of being present, moment by moment that you describe, Stephen, and what the Zen Master is talking about, Just doing it, which seems almost unconscious. On the one hand, you're talking about having a consciousness that is present every moment. On the other hand,

old friend I'd never met, which is not unlike dying."

Some participants that I talked with couldn't recall having a "reason" for attending the weekend. But many of us work in hospice or with people with AIDS or have had the experience of visiting a friend or relative who is dying. Some people knew Stephen from his wonderful books, *Who Dies*, *A Gradual Awakening*, *Meetings on the Edge*, and *Grist for the Mill* (with Ram Dass). Others had read *Bone of Space* and *Only Don't Know* by Soen Sa Nim and wanted the rare privilege of sitting with him.

I hope I can give you the flavor of the weekend by relating it to my own situation. When I was getting ready to leave for the conference on Friday night, my friend was late returning my car. I began to feel hot and restless, my mind darting around, "Where is she? What can she be doing? This always happens..." I was about to escalate to "Doesn't she respect my time?" when I looked at her dog, whom I was dog-sitting because he was near death, and saw his brown and white fur heaving out and back, out and back. I remembered why I was

"just doing it" sounds like there is no thinking, and no consciousness. Is there a difference?

SL: Most of our life is an afterthought. We're hardly here, we're hardly born, we're hardly present. We're thinking ourselves walking down the path in the woods. We're thinking ourselves seeing a rose, but we're not smelling, we're not walking. There's not the crunch of gravel, there's not the miracle of nature around. We are someone inside a shell, peering out through thought as a protective mechanism, not allowing ourselves to die into the moment, to just be there. To just do it, is to just be.

Usually we're thinking our lives, instead of just being. What we are describing may sound like another self-conscious process which is only going to cause more problems. But when you are moment to moment meeting with a merciful awareness, the senses, the experience—once you get inside that experience—you see that the fear of being overly self-conscious is only another thought about the experience. Inside of it, it is not that. It is not self-consciousness. It is instead more consciousness of self. Only the mind confuses it. The experience is not confusing at all.

One even gets so that the watcher is noticed as just another object floating in the vast spaciousness of awareness. There is no watcher, just a watching. Because, as long as there is a watcher, there is a point of view. And as long as there's a point of view,

there is confusion.

In fact, as long as there's a point of view, there's war.

THIRD QUESTIONER: I tend to worry a lot about the world situation, about famine, about nuclear war. I was struck by your comment, Stephen, that giving up suffering is the hardest thing we will ever do. I don't know why, but I keep feeling as much suffering as possible. And I was wondering, how do I overcome his resistance?

SSN: Many people look for happiness, freedom, or peace outside themselves. If you look for it outside, you will never get it. In the outside world, everything works by natural process. Nuclear accidents, famines, these all happen by natural process.

But if it is by natural process, then you cannot choose what will happen. Outside, you have no freedom of choice. There is only one way: Where is outside? Where is inside?

Your thinking makes outside and inside, and your thinking makes the line between them. If you have no mind, then you have no thinking, and you don't make inside and outside. So, if you go inside, inside, inside, then inside and outside will disappear, and then you can understand your treasure.

If you find your treasure, then you can do anything. You get peace mind, you get

there: to be with this tired old critter for an afternoon while his mom ran errands. In that moment I realized I was already at the conference on dying and that I had a choice to be angry with my friend or to be present to this dog. So I knelt down by Pretzels and stroked his wispy face hairs. When my friend came home I hugged her good-bye. "Late" became "ample."

The next day Stephen said, "There is no such thing as 'waiting patiently.' Only 'waiting' or 'patient.'" Over and over during the weekend, I heard just what I needed to hear from Stephen, Soen Sa Nim and other participants.

"I am one of those people who is always busy rearranging the room," said a woman who had been visiting a dying friend, "because the pain is too hard."

"What happens if you do nothing?" asked Stephen.

"It's just very painful," she answered. "Is 'just very painful' okay? Of course, the tendency to rescue is very common. So try some small pains first. Start with little moments of distrust, confusion...and build on your capacity...Before you visit, visual-



freedom and happiness. With that mind, you can help other people, moment to moment.

THIRD QUESTIONER: How do you find your treasure?

SSN: WHO ARE YOU? That's all.

I hope everybody goes inside, inside, inside, until inside and outside disappear. The inside and outside become one, and you find your treasure. I hope everybody finds their treasure, gets enlightenment, and helps all beings. Thank you.

SL: In a way, the wars outside ourselves are a mirror, an opportunity to see the war that has been going on inside us forever, the war between the mind and the heart. Let us stop the war. □

HOW TO GET TAPES AND BOOKS

Zen Master Seung Sahn is author of *Only Don't Know*, and *Ten Gates*, which are available from Primary Point Press, 528 Pound Road, Cumberland, RI 02864. A tribute book about his life, including contributions from many colleagues and students, entitled "Only DOing It for Sixty Years," was compiled and edited by Diana Clark and is available from the Kwan Um Zen School, 528 Pound Road, Cumberland, RI 02864. See the order forms in this issue.

Stephen Levine is co-author (with Ram Dass) of *Grist for the Mill*. He also wrote *A Gradual Awakening*, *Who Dies?* and *Meetings at the Edge*. His books and tapes (including meditations) are available from Warm Rock Tapes, P.O. Box 100, Chamisal, NM, 87521.

ize stillness. Visualize the distress before you go and let it arise. Soften. Let it float. As you meet your distress mercifully, it will dissolve, as all things do. Resistance invites it to stay, makes it more intense."

One man who was dying of ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, Lou Gehrig's disease) talked about the grief of losing everyone at once and some lingering feelings of disappointment about his brothers.

Stephen said, "Finishing business means not waiting for someone else to respond. Not give and take, just give. Not to wait for them to respond to it—then you have unfinished business...Just send forgiveness, give, just give."

Meditations on forgiveness, the "ahhhh" breath, and SOFT BELLY were interspersed throughout our questions and answers. I paired up with a massage therapist to learn "co-breathing." He lay on the floor face up. I watched his abdomen and, as he exhaled, I breathed out audibly "ahhhhh," the great sound of letting go. "Ahhh" allows energy release. Co-breathing is one way to be with people who are restless or in coma or near death.

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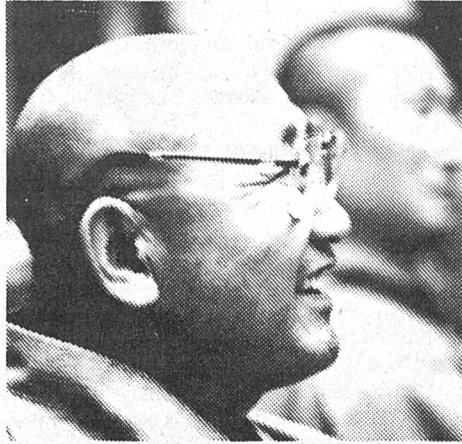
FIFTH ANNUAL SCHOOL CONGRESS and SIXTIETH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION for Zen Master Seung Sahn

By Sid Kemp

"For he's a jolly-good Zen Master, which nobody can deny." The weekend of July 31st, the Kwan Um Zen School gathered for its annual School Congress, and to celebrate Soen Sa Nim's sixtieth birthday. In Korea (Zen Master Seung Sahn's birthplace) the sixtieth birthday is a special time, because it signifies the completion of one's life work. Over 350 people gathered to commemorate this event, approximately 200 Americans and 150 Koreans.

The 75 of us who arrived by Friday evening, were lucky enough to be welcomed by a saxophone solo by David Mott. Moving beyond simple sounds into an exploration of mental states, Mr. Mott used his virtuosity to take us from an African plain in "Tiger Running . . . Nearer Breathing" to the celestial realms in "Regarding Starlight," and deep into ourselves with "Old Ghosts, New Demons." The last piece alternated between sections that sounded like something fluttering and dying, with the saxophone's valves audibly sounding its last heartbeat; and sections of more traditional melodic segments and riffs. In the climax, the two wove into one, unifying new and traditional musical forms. The audience responded with rapt attention that created a unified mind that remained for the entire weekend.

Friday evening and Saturday morning, we broke up into small groups to share our experiences of the past year, using the theme of giving and receiving to help focus our discussion and understand ourselves. My group was led by Nina Crumm Davis from New York City. We used the time to



Zen Master Seung Sahn.

The first was a discussion of "What is Working in our Zen Centers." The panelists were Bob Genthner, Lexington Zen Center; Susan Phillips, Empty Gate Zen Center (Berkeley); Bob Aili, Cambridge Zen Center; Ellen Sidor, The Meditation Place (Providence, RI); David Jordan, North Florida Meditation Center; Bruce Sturgeon, Asheville (NC) Zen Circle; and Vivion Vinson, Providence Zen Center. While some panelists focused on ways to draw new members, others noted that, especially in rural locations, a small but dedicated group was enough. There was a discussion of whether bringing noted speakers for talks on a variety of topics, as is done in Cambridge, was useful as it helped establish an identity in the community, but had not necessarily drawn people to the Zen Center practice. Networking with local adult

The panelists were Jeff Kitzes, Abbot of Empty Gate Zen Center; Jacob Perl, Master Dharma Teacher and School Abbot; Richard Streitfield, School Director; and Dennis Duermeier, Director of Kansas Zen Center.

In addition to discussions of financial security and organizational structure, some special concerns arose. These included the diversity of Zen Centers and groups, the high costs of having such a relatively small number of people spread out around the country, and the dynamics of how the individual centers and groups relate to the School administration.

After lunch, the birthday ceremony began. Master Dharma Teacher Lincoln

In Won Sunim of the Buddhist University in Seoul gave a short speech in both Korean and English, and led us in singing Happy Birthday. Master Dharma Teacher Richard Shrobe gave a formal dharma talk praising Soen Sa Nim as "a worn out Zen master with worn out students," and thanked him for his one-word teaching: "Try."

Soen Sa Nim's sixtieth birthday poem and a kong-an challenge (see box on page six) came next. Ven. Mahaghosana, the internationally known Cambodian monk, thanked Soen Sa Nim for helping him settle in the United States when he first arrived here as a refugee. Jae Won Sunim of Washington State gave a congratulatory talk.



A MOTLEY CREW From New Haven Zen Center performing their singing skit.

Rhodes gave an opening talk recalling one of Soen Sa Nim's first birthdays in America, when Linc had opened a door to a neighbor angry about the noise. Linc thanked Soen Sa Nim for helping him open so many doors over so many years. Tetsugen Glassman, Sensei, of the Zen Community of New York expressed his appreciation for Soen Sa Nim's vigorous style and work for world peace, as well as his creation of a dynamic sangha in America.



MASTER DHARMA TEACHER
George Bowman.



TWO GOOD FRIENDS during the Congress weekend were Jamie Highsmith, son of Bill and Nancy Highsmith of Cambridge Zen Center, and Micah Kessel, son of Ken and Kim Kessel of New Haven Zen Center (formerly many years at Chogye International).

create metaphors from our own growth and transformation during the year, and explored how Zen practice had supported our lives in Manhattan or Kansas City or San Francisco, in Zen centers, or at home with our families.

In the breaks between events, things were really hopping. People were greeting old friends in the hall as others ran by carrying carefully balanced pyramids of fruit to set before the Buddha. The dharma room was transformed about four times a day, with stages, chairs and cushions flying in and out as it went from meditation hall to conference center to birthday celebration. A crowd of dedicated volunteers led by David Gibbs prepared the meals. All meals were served in both Korean and American style, with the Korean food being prepared in the traditional way by the Korean women who had come for the ceremony. For those who wanted to escape the bustle inside, the outdoors provided a warm lawn for naps, and paths for relaxing walks. The sun cooperated by blessing the weekend with its light and warmth.

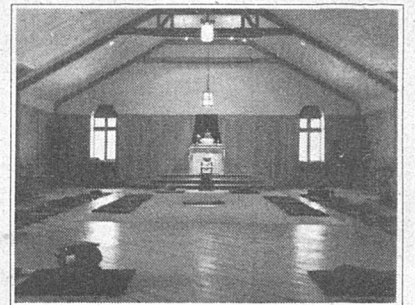
The remainder of Saturday morning was taken up by two roundtable discussions.

education and religious organizations was also discussed, as were methods of gathering financial support.

The second panel was a presentation of a new process that the School Council has begun, of reevaluating its goals and purposes with the aid of a management consultant.



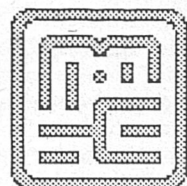
ZEN MOUNTAIN MONASTERY



"Our practice is alive, working, functioning, laughing, crying, dancing Zen, this very life Zen—the only kind of Zen there is. It's not an activity that takes place in the world, it's the activity of the world itself."

—Rev. John Daido Looi

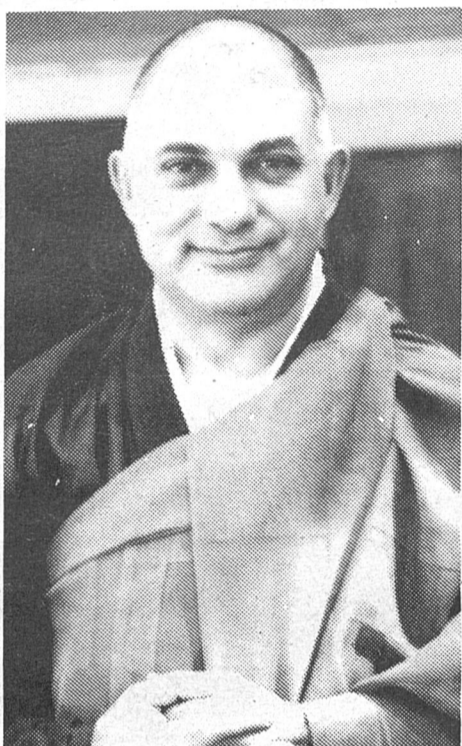
- *Zen Teacher John Daido Looi in full-time residence
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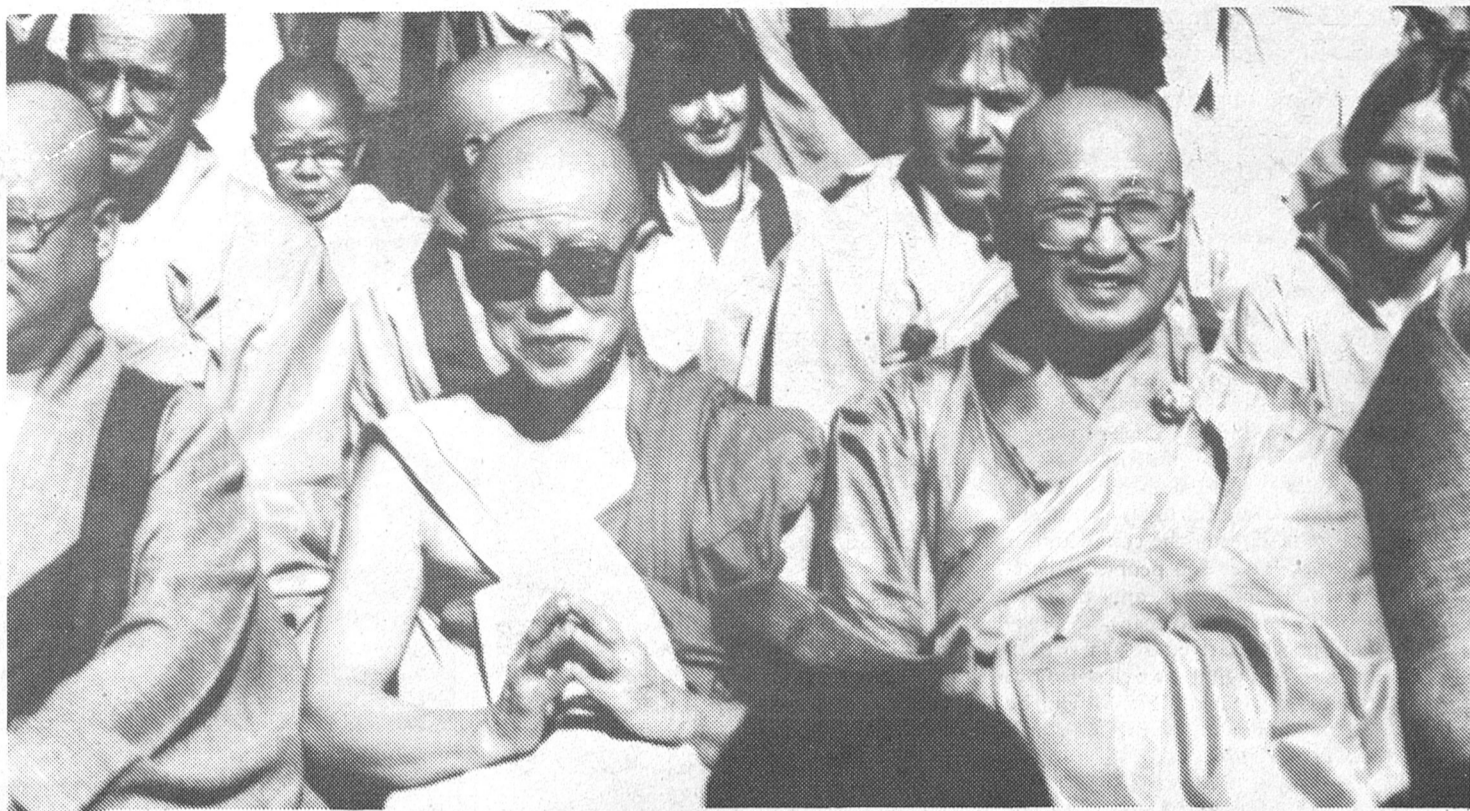
The evening featured lively presentations from 20 different Zen Centers and groups, all in tribute to Soen Sa Nim. Do Ryeon Sunim sang the traditional Korean freedom song, "Arida"; the Warsaw Zen Center offered a traditional Polish song; and greetings came from centers in Western Europe.

After two poems by Robin Rowedder from the Seattle Dharma Center, things really began rocking with the "Bodhi Rhythm Bills" from Empty Gate Zen Center, who gave new meaning to songs like YOUR LOVE KEEPS LIFTING ME HIGHER and YOU SAY IT'S YOUR BIRTHDAY. More music was provided by



TESTSUGEN GLASSMAN SENSI - Abbot of Zen community of New York, was a featured guest and speaker during the Congress weekend.

a barber shop quartet from Chicago. A parody of the Heart Sutra, called the "Subway Sutra" came from New York City. Soen Sa Nim himself was parodied in a masterful performance by David Mott from Ontario Zen Centre, complete with rubber chicken-Zen stick, a calculator that didn't understand Zero until it was crushed with a mallet, and the "traditional" Shit-on-a-hat. Another parody of Soen Sa Nim's teaching came in the form of a Southern Fried Dharma Bar and Grill, in which a sweet young woman hits a man who is trying to pick her up, and says, "I didn't ask your name, I asked, Who Are You?" New Haven Zen Center interrupted its own



VEN MAHAGHOSANANDA renowned Cambodian monk joins Soen Sa Nim during the birthday ceremonies.



KOREAN FAMILIES enjoy being with Soen Sa Nim.

beautiful presentation of a poem with a delivery of a fifty-pound drum of Kimchee to "Mr. Nim."

A slide presentation of the new land purchased in Kentucky, where Soen Sa Nim has plans for a retreat center, was accompanied by a tape of Korean chanting and narrated by Robert Genthner, Abbot of Lexington Zen Center. A humorous and surreal film about daily life at the Cambridge Zen Center followed.

Late night entertainment featured Myung Sook Chun and her troupe of professional dancers who offered traditional Korean religious and court dances. One was a beautiful fan display representing butterflies, and another was a vigorous drum dance in which five standing drums were pounded by the dancer. Maynard Silva and Mark Herz closed the evening with a lively blues jam session of guitar and violin.

Sunday morning, there was a panel talk on "Buddhism in America," with Tetsugen Glassman, Sensei, of the Zen Center of


New York, and his wife Helen, Master Dharma Teacher Barbara Rhodes of Providence Zen Center, and Joseph Goldstein, a co-founder of the Insight Meditation Society in Barre, MA. Glassman Sensei discussed the transformation beginning in his community as it plans to move into an abandoned school in Yonkers and provide housing and rehabilitative training for the



JOSEPH GOLDSTEIN, a Vipassana teacher and co-founder of Insight Meditation Society in Barre, MA, is an old Dharma friend of Soen Sa Nim.



A TRADITIONAL KOREAN DANCE performed by Myung Sook Chun.



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MORE OF THE SCHOOL CONGRESS

homeless of Westchester County, New York. This led to a lively discussion on the role of direct action in Zen and in Buddhist tradition, and an exploration of what it meant to challenge our clarity of mind by bringing it into the world to be used and tested. Joseph Goldstein discussed the way in which Vipassana was offering an approach to enlightenment for Americans, and cautioned about the dangers of losing the concept of enlightenment as Buddhism is translated into American terms.

Soen Sa Nim led a wrap-up discussion before lunch, answering questions about practice.

After lunch, there was a too-brief meeting of the Dharma Teachers Association that raised questions about how the association could help train dharma teachers and provide them with more support in teaching the practice. The day closed with a Precepts ceremony, in which 13 people formally became students of Soen Sa Nim by taking the Five Precepts, 13 more became Dharma Teachers, and two men, Jim Binger of Kansas Zen Center (monk's name: Do An Sunim) and Joe Donovan of Dharma Sa in Los Angeles (monk's name: Do Shim Sunim) had the last hair cut from their heads by Soen Sa Nim and became monks. In his Dharma talk, Soen Sa Nim said that it is very easy to become a monk, but very hard to decide to be one.

A special thank you to School Congress weekend photographers Paul Stevenson, Rick Schneider and Jeff Vandergriff.

The Kong-An Challenge

Typical of Soen Sa Nim's playfulness was his offer to give Transmission to anyone who gave the following Kong-an poem a correct last line. Some of the many answers received are listed. After reading them, Soen Sa Nim declared that there were "no keen-eyed students yet."

The Kong-an poem is as follows:

*"10,000 Dharmas return to one
Where does the one return?
It is not one, not zero*

10,00 Dharmas return to "Only Do It"!!!

No one, no 10,000, only don't know.

One Dharma returns to 10,000.

Your mother would be proud of you.

Zero, zero, one one.

How may I help you?

One has never left, why will it return?

Because it exists, wash rice before you boil it

and knead bread.

Ate good one today, now should return to

Cape Cod tonight.

10,000 guests return home. See you later

SSN.

*Very soft is true strength.
With harmony comes luck.
Goodness brings you virtue.
Follow situation then get happiness.
Forebearance will make you a great man.*

Zen Master Seung Sahn



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*led by Master Dharma
Teacher Barbara Rhodes*

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| 7-Day Intensive (open to all but new students) | \$125 members \$175 non-members |

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THE FIRST KNOT IS THE HARDEST...Do An Sunim (formerly Jim Binger) from Kansas Zen Center, shortly after becoming a monk. Helping him is Mu Soeng Sunim, Abbot of Diamond Hill Zen Monastery.

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ZEN CENTER OF LOS ANGELES WINTER ANGO

DECEMBER 28 - March 27, 1988



*Take up a blade of grass
and construct a treasure king's land;
enter into a particle of dust
and turn the great dharma wheel.*
—Dogen Zenji

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(l to r) Bruce Sturgeon and Sid Kemp.

TWO NEW STAFF JOIN PRIMARY POINT

Two talented men who became Dharma Teachers in the Kwan Um Zen School this August have signed on to help produce *PRIMARY POINT*, each bringing valuable strengths and skills to the paper. Bruce Sturgeon of Asheville, NC, has had years of experience in writing and marketing, and Sid Kemp of New York City brings an extensive writing and computer consulting background. Bruce is the new marketing manager, responsible for the advertising and distribution aspects of the paper and overseeing its financial health. He wrote the readership survey enclosed in this issue. Sid is the new feature editor, responsible for contributing major articles and serving as book review and poetry editor. Both men use computers extensively in their own work and will bring this expertise to the paper.

Bruce, 38, is director of sales, marketing and product development for Great Eastern Sun, a rapidly growing importer and manufacturer of natural and macrobiotic foods. He studied biology, biochemistry and toxicology and worked as a biochemist for 12 years before concentrating on his present interest in marketing, sales and business management for the past five years. He attended Naropa Institute as a Master's candidate in Buddhist studies and has been studying Zen for a number of years. Two years ago he founded the Asheville Zen Circle, which meets in his home. He is married to Kathy, a counseling psychologist, and they have three children, aged 8, 5, and 5 months.

Sid, 27, works as a consultant in computer applications in New York City and is studying desktop publishing. He has been writing since the age of 8, and says at present his life is dedicated to answering the question, "How can I remain joyous and helpful while running around New York City 16 hours a day?" He has been practicing Zen for the past seven years. He majored in creative writing at Oberlin College, graduating in 1982, and has written for a number of New Age magazines, including *East/West Journal*. He is married to Chris, a rabbinical student. Sid's first contributions to the paper are the 3-page feature on the "Conscious Living, Conscious Dying" workshop, as well as a new book review column entitled "Reading Matters," both of which debut in this issue.

PRIMARY POINT welcomes them with enthusiasm. We encourage readers to respond to their efforts, and especially to fill out and return the enclosed readership survey, so that we can continue improving the paper and make it more responsive to your needs. □

NUNNERY AND BUDDHIST RETREAT CENTER OPENS IN COLORADO

Chan-Nhu, a Buddhist pagoda with facilities for residential meditation courses, has been opened in Lakewood, CO, near Denver. The nunnery is open to Buddhist nuns and laywomen of all traditions for visiting and practice. The emphasis is on silent retreats, especially in Vipassana style (insight meditation). Women exploring the nun's life are particularly encouraged to visit. There are facilities for self retreats as well as teacher-led retreats. For nuns, room is free but nuns must be self-supporting.

The new center was opened this summer by Rev. T.N. Chan-Nhu, originally from Vietnam, and is coordinated by Rev. Martha Dharmapali, an American Buddhist nun. In the spring of 1988 a Buddhist women's conference will be held. For information about the nunnery and its events, write to:

Rev. Martha Dharmapali
Chan-Nhu Buddhist Pagoda
7201 West Bayaud Place
Lakewood, CO 80226

New Buddhist Social Action Group Formed

In December 1986 a new Buddhist social action group was formed, called "Buddhists Concerned for Social Justice and World Peace", by Samu Sunim, president of the Zen Lotus Society which has temples in Toronto, Michigan and Mexico. The group has issued written statements concerning the phasing out of the Cambodian re-

fugee camps in Thailand, capital punishment, and in support of the People's Buddhist Movement in Korea. The new group urges social service as a good Dharma practice especially for laypeople. For more information, write Zen Lotus Society, 46 Gwynne Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M6K 2C3.

SNOW LION PUBLICATIONS

Snow Lion Publications is dedicated to the preservation and promotion of Tibetan culture. Founded in 1980 following a visit of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Ithaca, Snow Lion now publishes 15 to 20 books a year on Tibetan Buddhism, Tibet, and related fields. They offer a wide variety of books, posters, cards, video and audio tapes as well as beautiful dharma items through their mail order catalog and retail store. You may receive their excellent newsletter and catalog simply by contacting them at: Snow Lion Publications, P.O. Box 6483, Ithaca, NY 14851, (607) 273-8506.

An account of the "Engaging American Buddhism" retreat and experiment for artists with Thich Nhat Hanh at the Ojai Foundation May 1-12

(The following account is drawn from a retreat journal kept by Ellen Sidor, one of more than 60 artists participating in an unusual and historic 10-day retreat last May at the Ojai Foundation, high up in the foothills above Santa Barbara in southern California. Special thanks go to Thay (Vietnamese Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh) and his senior assistant Sister Phuong, the Ojai Foundation staff and founder Joan Halifax (a long-time student of Zen Master Seung Sahn), and Marlow Hotchkiss and Cynthia Jurs, coordinators of the retreat. The basic concept for the retreat flowed forth from Thay's idea of artists as "lineage holders" for the culture and that Buddhism can most fully take root in American culture with the active participation of artists who are practicing. The three basic elements to be joined were a firm understanding of the Dharma, meditation practice, and artists in their art process.

The song/poem by Deena Metzger and Betsy Rose is used with permission. Many of the quotes used in the journal cannot be attributed; those that can are so noted.

Participants lived in tents and a few guest yurts scattered about the Ojai property. The daily schedule included an early morning meditation, breakfast, samu (work period in which people could choose the area they wanted to work in), a 45-minute walking meditation, Dharma talk by Thay, then lunch. After lunch there was free time for studio work or gatherings, a tea ceremony (for the first three days) in which much group sharing was done, another sitting period, then supper. In the evening the time was spent in a big gathering, either sharing a common project like gatha writing or watching live or slide presentations of each other's art, and a closing sitting.

As the retreat got underway it rapidly became apparent that there were many agendas being worked on, probably too many. To list just a few: working on Thay's agenda of creating forms for American Buddhism, slowing down and being on retreat (in the case of some artists, their first experience), exploring feminist forms within Buddhism, the 12-step program and its relationship to Buddhism, networking with other artists, working on one's own project(s), and last but not least, trying to stay with the schedule. For most of the first week, Thay insisted that we keep silence at meals, which created an interesting tension as ideas, networking and mirth bubbled increasingly forth. An everpresent sound was the mindfulness bell, rung throughout the day sometimes as often as every 15 minutes, to remind us to stop what we were doing, breathe and smile.

On the final day, we offered a public performance to share the experiment with several hundred invited guests and dignitaries. The following two days, for those who could stay, were for rest and evaluation of the retreat. Unfortunately there is not enough space in this publication to give more than a brief taste of the retreat. A fuller, richer account of it, including contributions from the many notable artists present and their follow-up discussions, will be published hopefully sometime next year. To add your name to a list to receive information, please write to: Lightworks, Route 7, Box 123C, Old Santa Fe Trail, Santa Fe, NM 87505.

In the spirit of continuing the experiment begun at Ojai, the Providence Zen Center in Cumberland, RI, is planning a 10-day artists retreat in early July 1988, with a relaxed schedule and non-hierarchical structures. Please write to the Director, Providence Zen Center, 528 Pound Road, Cumberland, RI 02864 if you wish to receive information about this retreat.

Five dozen artists, mountains, sun, children, yurts, colorful food, two old dogs, wheelbarrows, and stones everywhere. "The valley of the moon"—stark mountain range, boulder-strewn. Hummingbirds, sage growing everywhere. Joan (Halifax) said last night that there is something irrepressible, something untamable here, something....wild? Last night like a burst of cheering from an athletic field, coyotes in full melodic cry, voices strangely like children.

Sitting under the teaching tree today—hungry, sleepy, listening to Thay talk about mindfulness in such simple terms: how to really eat a tangerine! Being here and not losing the present moment in pursuit of the future. Learning to breathe mindfully, learning to smile.

Standing in line (actually, a polite mob) last night to sign the meal "rota"—feeling irritated, rushed, wanting to return to my tent, get away, whatever—so typical of "not here" mind. Wanting to leave the



energy field and yet drawn to it. Such a funny idea, really, getting a bunch of artists together to meditate and turning them loose on this land! It feels good! Usually it's "not touching"—here it's "touch, please." Shape, flow, listen to the land.

A group of us are working on a power spot that has been neglected—has a Celtic maze and fantastic lookout. The idea is to make it welcoming, nurturing, inviting. Lots of energy in that spot. I walked it yesterday and was entranced by the possibilities.

Tea Ceremony, Saturday afternoon... "Tangerine peels, empty tea cups, I litter their presence."

Walking meditation: "Let your feet make a peace treaty with the floor—first step, contact; second step, treaty." (Thay)

Watching two rabbits frolicking and foot-fighting—a prelude to ? Just coming out of afternoon sitting, people half-way up the hillside, watching, chuckling—innocent, free. In the afternoon sun, rabbits near the edges of the meadow, grazing, alert but not afraid of us. Even the dogs ignore them...Sense of spaciousness, 15 minutes before dinner bell, eternity—bird-song, crickets, mountain sound. A flute playing up the hill, truck going by. How ordinary, how miraculous that time has slowed so.

Saturday evening...recapping the day. Relax the quality of striving, of overcoming, breathe and smile (Thay)...Beginning to compose "the American gatha"—taking from Vietnamese and translated into English, then used as a basis for brainstorming.

Resistance to smiling practice: let it roll. Softening of the mouth = softening of the heart. "People who have to smile on their jobs, actually live longer." "Forty-eight hours after he died, Gregory Bateson smiled. If he could do it under those circumstances, I guess I can try."

Walking meditation instruction, Sunday a.m...."Be like an astronaut who knows this is his last few hours, stranded on the

"MAY OUR BODIES BECOME A

moon—so thoughts are very simple: heaven is to walk on the earth, home, just taking simple steps, happiness." (Thay)

Sitting under the medicine tree, 50 quiet folks. Bee hum. Waiting, not waiting, readiness, not even readiness. Just being there. No thought of enlightenment or teaching, no teacher, no student. Thay comes slowly. Goes down to the Dharma yurt to get a cushion. Prep. is slow—everything moves slowly here, but no one seems uptight about it. Sense of having "enough" time is delightful. It feels very old, very ordinary. A man in robes sitting under a tree. Simple, everyday. Serene. From Thay's Dharma talk:

Sitting like this is an opportunity to be happy. If you cannot be happy now, then when? Happiness is made from awareness.

"Solitude—dwelling in the present moment and not worrying about us being attached to past or future. Solitude is the base for contact with others. Solitude means getting in touch with yourself. Many of us are afraid of being alone—so often we do not have the courage to turn off a boring TV program.

"The awareness of suffering is a very important part of growing up as a human being. But some kinds of suffering are useless—we make them up. First recognize them, by breathing. Life is both dreadful and wonderful. Suffering is not enough—you will wither like a flower without water. You must also emphasize and open yourself to the wonderful.

On "heroic sitting"—"In many Zen Centers we do violence to ourselves. When we force something like that, it will bounce back. Our body has a habit of recuperating. We need to learn the non-violent way of sitting."

Sunday evening presentations: "Our art is our practice, our art is how we transform our suffering." (Joan Halifax)....The meeting of the Buddha and the Goddess—theme? Koan? Try to imagine what that meeting would be like. (Anna Douglas)....The Three Fates, updated: the creator, the preserver, the transformer.

Third day. Fasting still, feels good, light, tight, full of electrons. At samu this a.m., four of us are digging a terrace below the power spot. Hot work—full sun, great view, cutting into old sod to create a path for walking and meditation. It took a while for the four of us to get into a team effort, but once we did, a rhythm established itself. Much water needed! The little park seems to invite our energy.

Walking meditation instruction: breathe like a thread through sheets of paper. Each step a page, the breath holding them together. (Thay)

Walking on the same trail, yet it is never the same. Today hot, breezy, a burst of gratitude for the little winds that come through the woods. Using Thay's walking meditation gatha all the way (When I walk, my mind goes in a million directions; now I walk in peace. With each step I create a warm breeze, with each step a lotus blooms), managed to cut down a lot of extraneous thinking. Just being here is enough, complete. The picture: Thay walking ahead of us with his Vietnamese hat and brown robes—learning so much from how he walks—the long line of us strung out behind him like beads on a string—breath is the thread, each step is a bead. So simple that we usually miss it. Day after day we are asleep!

"The Dharma is not something readymade, like Campbell soup."

This is really a remarkable coming-together. All sorts of mirth bubbles up like a river running through each of us—just the simple joy of being here, being who we are. Thay puts us the tasks: to create gathas, songs, a way of American Buddhism that is our way, suited to our language. Last night as Joan presented the plan for the evening, there was a surge of excitement, real enthusiasm. This is what we have been made for, summoned to, as "the language hold-

ers of the culture." Time after time as people got up and went to the center and either spoke or sang or whatever, I felt chills of resonance and often came to tears.

There are a lot of good hearts here, friendships already underway, a sense of incredible leisure to explore whatever is emerging. People's personalities are beginning to emerge, especially through the works that were shared last night. The wonderful silliness of play without alcohol or party food or even music—how amazing!

Tea ceremony, MondayMarlow taking the offering to the Buddha—walking slowly, mindfully, shyly, a lot like Jesse did (his 10-year old son) the last two days. See-

SILENCE

Silence
Pours into me
Like a cataract of wine
Reddening the sea
And I'm drowning
In a drunken melody
Which is still
Which is still

And if I do not speak, I will die
And if I speak, this silence
Which has become my breath
Will disappear

Silence
Breaks over me
Like an avalanche of snow
Burying the trees
And I'm dreaming
Of a frozen melody
Which is white
Which is white

And if I do not speak, I will die
And if I speak, this silence
Which has become my breath
Will disappear

This wine of silence, it is so sweet
I fear that it has no end

And if I do not speak, I will die
And if I speak, this silence
Which has become my breath
Will disappear

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Betsy Rose

ing the child in the adult, the adult in the child.... "Thank you to this very special tree for giving us shade, that's been sitting here much longer than we have." (Mayumi Oda) Sister Phuong suggested that she paint it sometime... The architect of the reflecting pool who lived under this tree for six weeks, said to Joan that this would be very important some day...Geomancers said this tree is a vortex of energy on this ridge. "A man who planted trees and grew happiness"—book recommended by Mayumi.

The foundations of this experiment (as given to Joan by Thay) are three, like a tripod: the teachings, the organization of the community, and the financial structure. Dharma is a growing reality. As the Buddha taught and met many more people, his teaching became multi-faceted.... More

than 40 schools of Buddhism after the first 100 years since his nirvana. Therefore, more Dharma doors should be open. The Dharma is not something ready-made, like Campbell soup. We must deeply understand the culture. What are the problems of this society?

The birth of art forms is very necessary for the practice of the Dharma. We must be brave enough to see what goes along with the Dharma. Community life should be

PRAYER-STICK FOR THE WORLD''

simple. Simple life is the only way out of our present problems. "You must deeply understand your society, as well as the precepts of Buddhism." (Thay)

Monday evening discussion. ...Invitation to the bell is still the best part so far. ...Big discussion about people resisting the agenda and people not feeling that, but being excited about the context. Discussion about project vs. process. Feeling of being invited—to not do anything in particular.

The anarchism of artists—not willing to be led. Struggling to integrate the profoundness of the Dharma and the Dharma of art. Feeling of resistance to being violated, programmed.

Creating who I am, discovering who we are is Buddhism. Mayumi: conference feels a little bit confined, a little too "sweet." Kaz Tanahashi: very excited about being here and being at a turning point in Buddhism. Very grateful to Thay. Did Jesus call himself a Christian? Do we really want to limit this wonderful vessel by giving it a name? Feeling excited by the challenge of the vision Thay offered.

Others: these feelings are a response to Thay's invitation. Concern about wanting to heal the world and working on it by healing oneself—looking at one's dark side and trying to "be peace." Pleased at Thay's recognition of artists as those who carry the images of the culture. Exciting to be invited to work together. Want opportunities to share feelings together: your releasing of your anguish heals me. Is that the feminine side of Buddhism manifesting right here and now? Always before a hierarchy, a patriarch and a pyramid.

Thay: "Buddhism is the vision of togetherness. Like inviting a friend to a meal. Invite him inside, take his coat, let him get used to the house, serve him some tea, let a cosy feeling develop. The silence is particularly important."



Tuesday a.m. after walking meditation ...again hot. Now many people walking barefoot. Symptoms are beginning to appear: poison oak, blisters, fatigue, tears, one small freak-out. People are settling in without the sense of masks and poses so evident in the first days. I think we are beginning to believe we are really here, together, with this unusual and incredible chance to meet each other, work together in a different way perhaps...when most of us are so used to working, producing alone.

"Walking without arriving. That is wonderful. We hardly know how to stop, that is our trouble. If we continue like this, the destruction of our planet is unavoidable. It's like a person on a galloping horse who does not know how to stop or where the horse is going. Our fear makes us continue. The last few days we have been practicing stopping, aimlessness and have begun to be alive. Walking meditation is a wonderful way to learn the art of stopping.

Our civilization is based on the idea of exploitation for human benefit. Even artists look at things and people with an eye to profit; but if we do that, we cannot really enter into their reality. Pragmatism—the truth is something that pays. Meditation—a way to truth with a 'payment' at the end? How can we bring elements to a civilization that uses everything? A poem, article, painting about stopping, about aimlessness, can we do that?" (Thay)

In artistic consciousness, Thay explained, the storehouse consciousness plays a great role. When he greeted us before meditation this morning, he said he hoped we were not delivering a baby, but that we were pregnant. Each minute is a work of art, so the time when we are **not** working, painting, etc. is also a work of art. A true Buddhist practices joy at the same time as his/her art. The work of art is only a photograph of your being.

Tuesday evening ...slide presentation. Six or seven of us showed slides of our work. Fantastic view into the 21st century! Many works of light and Bodhisattva-hood. Clearly a lot of people are moving in the direction of harmony.

Wednesday a.m. after walking meditation ...met Grandfather Semu this a.m. (a Chumash Indian medicine man). He spent the night after making visits to prisons in which some of his people are held. He is an Oak Medicine man—beautiful face, calm energy. At the breakfast circle (around the cottonwood tree) he said, "Welcome to my land." There was a general laugh, but how much suffering lies behind that simple statement. I am constantly amazed how people like him, like Thay and Mahaghosana, can walk around in this world with so much joy, having seen so much suffering. Their secret is a profound one.

Wednesday a.m. ...Thay's talk on the Heart Sutra... "interbeing"—the cloud and the sheet of paper "interare." Without one, you will not have the other. Also in the blank sheet of paper is the sun and the rain. They also "interare." Also the forest—it takes many trees to produce the Sunday NY Times. You also see the logger and his daily bread, and our minds are there, too. There is nothing that is not already there, coexisting with the sheet of paper. You cannot be yourself alone—you must "interbe." To be means to "interbe."

The sheet of paper is made **only** of non-paper elements; it is full of everything. And yet, it is empty. To be empty, is to be empty of **something**.

Wealth is made of poverty, and poverty is made of wealth. We must understand this. If we do not take care of these things (like Third World suffering), we will not continue in our prosperity. Already the seeds of the Third World suffering are deeply within our society.

Wednesday night presentations ...a lot of energy tonight. Announcements: a meeting tomorrow about healing/transformation/service. Walking mandala meeting. Caterpillars are causing rashes. People want to see more of the performances. Also we still haven't "introduced" ourselves. People want to hear more about struggles and process of art, in small groups. Maybe a map of what's going on and where. "Art is really a celebration of our understanding." A women's practice will meet under the

"In many Zen Centers, we do violence to ourselves.... we have to learn the non-violent way of sitting."

moon tonight. Marlow suggests that the work period should be a mindfulness practice. Silence and breathing and mindful working. ...A pebble ceremony will be planned.

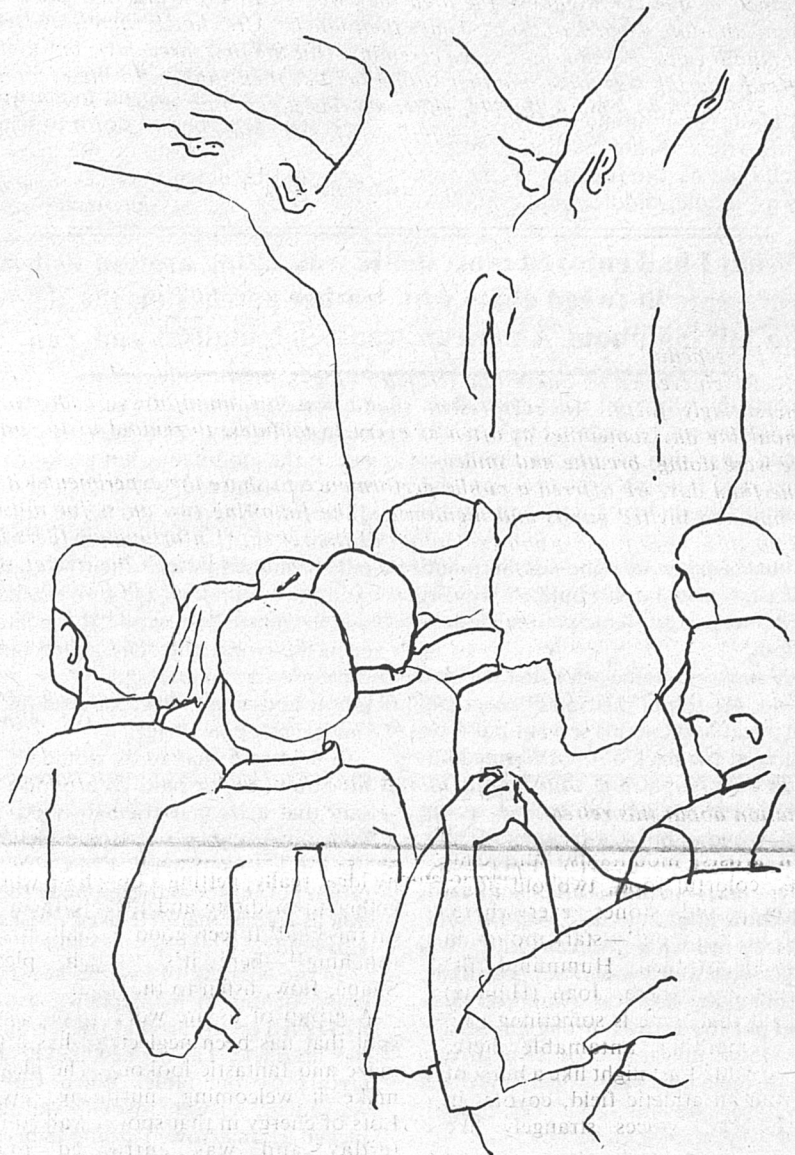
Thursday a.m. ...Thay's talk, prefaced by the singing of a chant by Sister Phuong, written by Thay during the worst part of the Vietnam War. A talk about art without using the word "art." Buddhism is a healing power, but if you give it a name, it will have less power. We have to be able to see Buddhism in non-Buddhist elements, otherwise we cannot find it anywhere. Graduating from Buddhism doesn't take 12 years—you can do it right now. ...The vision of inter-being, of non-duality, can be the beginning of a new civilization. But the seeds are already present in this civilization, in our own traditions. The "policy" of interbeing would have saved many lives. Vietnam (war) has not ended, it is present in

Nicaragua, El Salvador, the Middle East and South Africa.

He suggests a studio time for "peace being" art, with meditation—a poem, flower arrangement, song—a two-hour period to meditate, breathe, smile and produce a brief work of art.

Thursday night presentations ...Incredibly moving songs by Betsy Rose, about alcoholism, secrets, silence...and a request from Thay to really address our "commission" about American Buddhism.

Friday ...documentary film about Thay in Australia by Gillian Coote, called "The Awakening Bell" ...another documentary film about two elderly Japanese artists witnessing Hiroshima, called "Hellfire."



In the morning Dharma talk, Thay talked about the Tiep Hien Order and its precepts. Said of the retreat, its weakness is that there are no children artists. At the end of the talk he invited some of the new song versions of the gathas, promises (vows) and the Heart Sutra to be sung. One was a very funny version with guitar (rock & roll, country western & folk) sung by Wendy and Stephanie from Green Gulch.

accept any that weren't enlightened. But we all got transmission, he said.

Different feeling today—people more into their trips, less meditative. The end is being felt, that magical sense of so many possibilities has closed down some. I finished my adobe (wall) carving, a lot easier today because Brother John and the crew got a tarp up over the area. Jack was shirtless and doing an Indian chant with a drum the whole time, involving the Celtic maze. Sounded a bit mournful.

Joan mentioned last night about the moratorium coming at Ojai, when everyone is being asked to leave until September. Said all the staff were processing their farewells. For some, it may be permanent. So there is a preoccupied mood about, partly from the artists, dealing with the on-coming end of this experiment. A sense of a special place and time never to be retrieved.

Sunday a.m. ...final tea ceremony and presentation of "insight" poems... everyone dressed up again and carried a flower. A heavy mist covers the mountains, no sign of the sun, although damp, it is not cold, just clammy. Moisture on the tents, a faint earthy smell everywhere.

Now we sit in silence as the tea is poured & passed around. A final rest & breathing space before we stop being "guests" & start being "hosts" for the multitude expected to arrive today. Some feelings of resentment/encroachment are appearing—our cosy little community is going to be invaded by those outside. Yet it all fits perfectly. Having received the seed, the torch, it is our obligation to share it, to pass it along, to nurture it. So even before we leave to sort out the tremendous implications & responsibilities of this retreat, we are being asked to share our insights & this nurturing space.

Over the last few days people have mentioned continuity—it seems that breathing & the 15-minute bell (sometimes 30 minute, and at meals sometimes 5!) that recalls us to it have been very significant in reminding us to be mindful. I doubt we would have been able to break our habit of ceaseless preoccupation with past & future, without such tools. Therefore thank you, bell & breath.

Ellen Sidor has been associated with PRIMARY POINT since its inception in 1983. A professional stone sculptor as well as an editor, she has been a student of Zen Master Seung Sahn since 1981. She has two teenage daughters and lives in Providence, RI, where she runs a meditation support group called The Meditation Place.

ALREADY HOME

Continued from page 1

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.

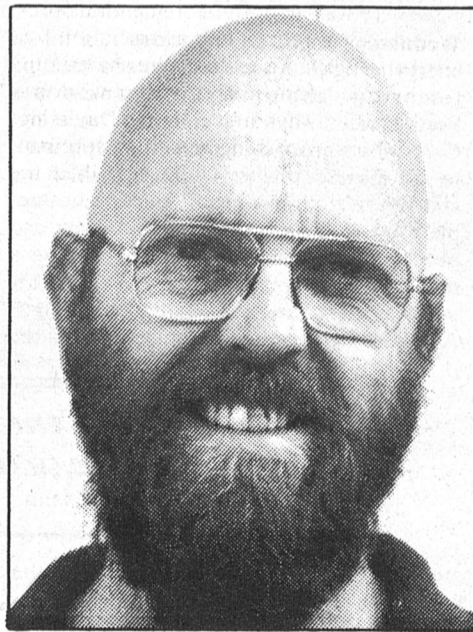
I went to talk to Soen Sa Nim. I told him I had these job offers at such and such places, and also at Los Angeles. Soen Sa Nim said, "Ah, Los Angeles—good! Tahl Mah Sah [then a fledgling Zen Center] needs help." I thought about it and said, "That's a good idea. I'll go to Los Angeles and help Tahl Mah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

A CELEBRATION OF WOMEN IN BUDDHIST PRACTICE

San Francisco Bay Area
Conference
March 14 and 15, 1987

By Julie Wester

It was clear from the beginning that this conference was to be radically different from any we had known. We had no models. Yet our shared vision was so ripe and present among us that it carried a diverse group of 12 women from varied Buddhist experiences and backgrounds through six months of intense planning. Our collaboration resulted in an essentially leaderless format which allowed Bay Area women from Zen, Tibetan and Vipassana communities to join together for two days of shared meditation practice and intimate small group conversation.

It was not surprising that such an event should emerge in the Berkeley hills, overlooking San Francisco Bay, a epicenter for the women's movement of the past 15 years. This gathering marked a coming together of women bearing within themselves the two powerful forces of grounded feminist consciousness and maturing Buddhist awareness.

It was integral to the vision that we came together as equal participants. As the meetings of the planning group progressed, it also became clear to us that our process in this small group was creating a model for the conference itself, just as the conference would become a model for future gatherings. We worked together with great intensity and ease, watching with some amazement as the leadership moved among us quite naturally, with first one, then another, speaking the words that were appropriate at any moment. It became clear that each of us had different pieces of the information and insight we needed in order to manifest the vision.

Such a conference was unprecedented: never before had women from the major

[Buddhist] traditions been called together. Would they come? As we sent out the invitations to women on Bay Area sangha mailing lists, we did not know what would happen. Weeks before the March dates, the 150 available spaces were filled. By the end, we had extended the capacity to 165 and 50 women remained on the waiting list. We were right on time.

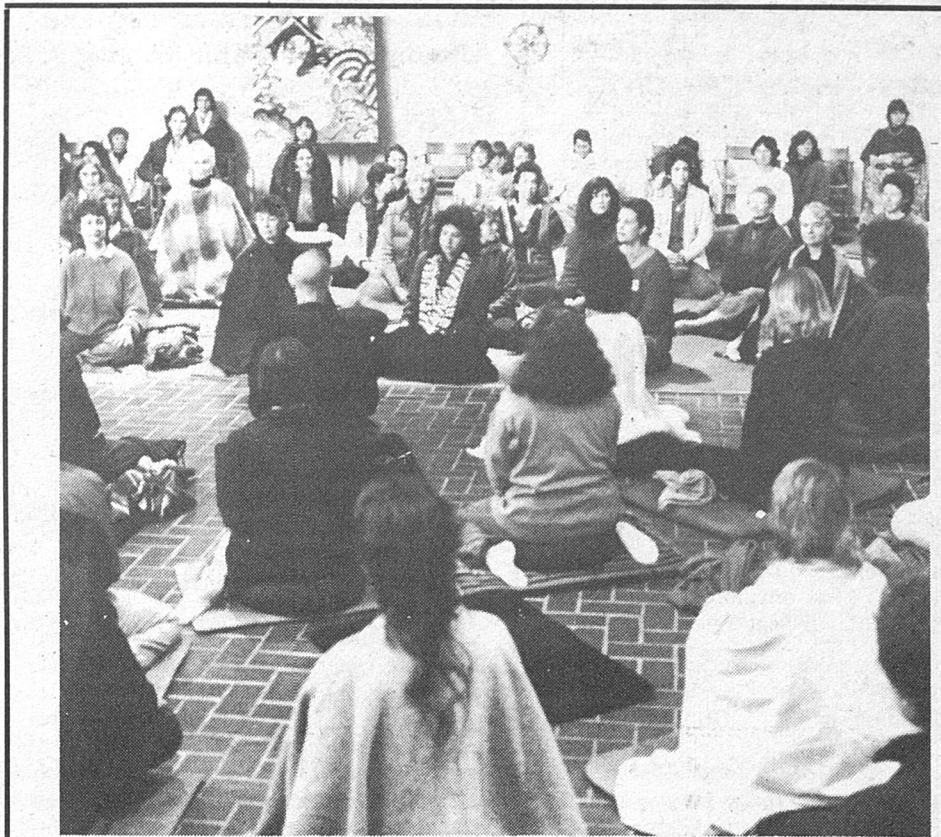
The first morning began with silent meditation, the entire group sitting together in concentric circles surrounded by bright Tibetan banners and large dakini murals recently painted by Zen practitioner and artist Mayumi Oda, a participant in the conference. The conference began as four women stood within the circle to speak of their personal spiritual journeys, modeling a depth of honesty and openness in their sharing, transmitting to the group the spirit and opportunity of the gathering. We then moved into Home Groups of 10 women each in which each woman's unique yet often familiar story could be heard. These Home Groups met together daily, allowing continuity and a building sense of community.

Two periods each day were scheduled as topic-oriented groups. Facilitators functioning primarily as participants were present in each circle, as women chose the

"We felt like pioneers"

areas of particular interest to them. The pervasive issue of authority/power was addressed in four different groups: Acknowledging Inner Authority, The Teacher-Student Relationship, Expressions of Feminine Power and Being A Spiritual Guide. Other groups addressed our relationship to Social Service And Political Action, Women's Relationship With The Natural World, Intimate Relationships/Sexuality, Forms Of Practice, Movement And Sounding, Addictive Behavior, Healing, Psychotherapy, Creativity, Right Livelihood, Money, and Intensive Practice. There were also gatherings of Mothers, Crones (older women), Lesbians and unaffiliated women (those practicing without the support of a traditional Buddhist community).

As women sat together they listened and spoke out of the silence born of deep practice. There was an aura of tremendous presence as well as respect and appreciation for the truth of each individual. We shared our questions and fears as well as our wisdom. We did not always agree. U.C. Davis art professor and conference planning committee member Cornelia Schulz described it: "This was a non-hierarchical structure, a safe container in which women could relate to each other on an equal basis, regardless of their status in their sanghas or the outside world." For women who usually function as teachers and leaders within their sanghas, it was an opportunity to hear truth spoken by other voices, as well as what was for



At the present time, a Western form of Buddhism is emerging which will reflect our culture and its values. Historically, women's experience in Buddhist tradition has been largely untold and unacknowledged. In the absence of models, we experience stress, confusion, as well as growing excitement and creative opportunity. This conference is a forum for women engaged in Buddhist practice to participate in defining the shape of Buddhism in America.

Purposes of the conference:

- to share and explore the experience of women practicing Buddhism
- to empower ourselves and each other to trust our visions and experiences
- to support each other in shaping a spiritual tradition which includes women's realities
- to provide the opportunity for community and exchange among Bay Area women engaged in the many expressions of Buddhist practice

Conference Statement

some a rare opportunity to speak openly of their own honest humanness. Others who had rarely if ever spoken were invited to give voice to their own experience.

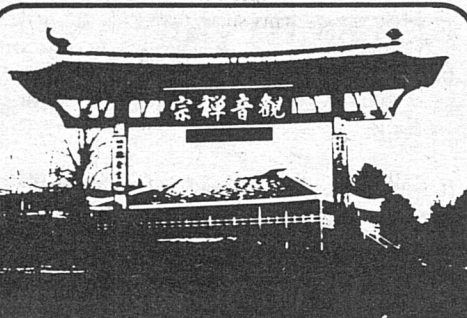
On Saturday evening we shared a Full Moon ceremony and Sunday noon a "Ladies Luncheon and Buddhist Fashion Show" where we laughed at ourselves as women modeled traditional Zen robes, Vipassana blankets and Tibetan prostration gear.

Perhaps the primary significance of this event was that the gathering itself was an expression of the values that were being explored. This also points to a key contribution of women in the creation of new contexts for Buddhist practice in the West. There is among women an insistence on an integrated practice, one which can be embodied, which can be lived, and which honors the earth, the human body, and the experience of women. As political activist and conference participant Kathleen Deffendorf put it: "We were actually living our ideals for two days. It was amazing how

well it worked." Writing for the *Inquiring Mind*, a journal of the Vipassana community, Nelly Kaufer and Carol Newhouse said it powerfully: "For two days we embodied a new form of Buddhism in which the relative truth of feminism and the absolute truth of Buddhism supported and informed each other. We felt like pioneers."

The March conference has spawned many small on-going circles of women, as well as ongoing monthly women's sittings in the Bay Area. There are plans for seasonal gatherings on the Solstices and Equinox to again call together women from all traditions. There are tentative plans for a national conference late in the summer of 1988. To be placed on a mailing list for a future national conference, you may write to CWBP, 3832 Cerrito Avenue, Oakland, CA 94611. ☐

Julie Wester has been a student and practitioner of Vipassana meditation for 15 years, and currently leads retreats on the West Coast.



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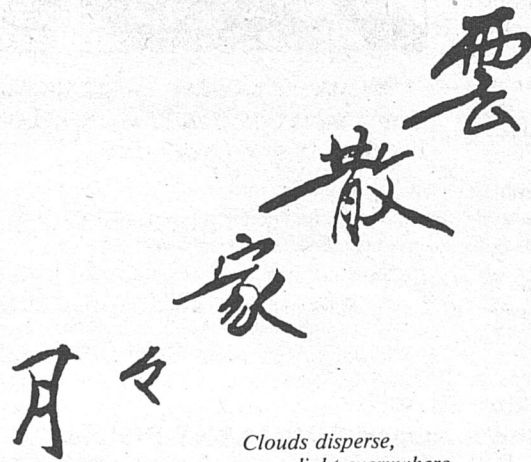
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Clouds disperse,
moonlight everywhere

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PASSIONATE JOURNEY, The Spiritual Autobiography of Satomi-Myodo. Translated and Annotated by Sallie B. King, 1987, Shambhala, 212 pages, Paperback, \$12.95.

By Dhananjay Joshi

One of the most endearing things about spiritual practice, is that one can find sources of inspiration almost everywhere. If one is receptive enough and sensitive to one's surroundings, everything becomes a 'Teacher' in the truest sense of the word. Of course, there are scriptures and religious texts to map out progress for one, but then, Zen teachings have never really been that patient with texts. One must work hard and try again and again with utmost sincerity. Seeking truth can be a lonely journey, but the rewards are magnificent.

I always find it an immensely satisfying experience when I read about the efforts of seekers such as Satomi-San who overcame tremendous odds. Starting with a sincere heart, they strive on. Satomi-San believed in her sincerity. To be sincere is to know one's true nature. Satomi-San's religious encounters are fascinating. A reluctant early marriage and motherhood, abandonment, loss of her child and a struggle to keep the balance between sanity and insanity were only the leading experiences on her way to becoming a shamanic miko. She subjected herself to intense ascetic practices and served as a medium in exorcisms. At midlife, when she turned to Zen, she gained a different perspective to all these experiences without negating them. In Zen, she found the peace and fulfillment she sought. Under the guidance of Yasutani Roshi, finally she discovered her spiritual home. She writes at one point: "I, who had made a 180 degree turn once before, turned another 180 degrees. Truly, I turned 360 degrees and arrived at the original starting point....". Embarrassed that her writings may seem like self-advertisement, she says:

"Awakening from the dream, I see: Sincerity is simply my original nature Where, then, shall I look for it?"

The book is in two parts. First part contains Satomi-San's autobiography and the second part consists of the commentary on the autobiography by the author. Professor Sallie King's commentary is lucid and provides a wonderful insight into the spiritual changes in Japan at the time, especially keeping in mind that Satomi-San was a woman and received her own share of unfair treatment from the society she lived in. This historic context is very revealing.



TAKE THE "A" TRAIN...members of Chogye International Zen Center in New York City performing the "Subway Sutra."

GLIMPSE OF ABHIDHARMA

(From a seminar on Buddhist Psychology), Chogyam Trungpa, Shambhala, 1987, Paperback, 117 pages, \$10.95.

By Dhananjay Joshi

I like the first sentence of this book... "The Abhidharma is perhaps regarded as dry and scholarly, theoretical. We will see...". What the late Trungpa Rinpoche wanted to do was to present the Abhidharma and "to begin at the beginning and present the pure, immaculate, genuine teaching." It is important to understand the theoretical base of any teaching and then in our practice reach that balance between the practice and the intellect. Abhidharma has been taught in various ways and numerous books exist from simple expositions to voluminous commentaries. Students have devoted years to learning this basic philosophy of Buddhism common to all schools, but the key is to "neglect neither the intuition nor the intellect." This book provides a glimpse into Abhidharma with a view to combining the intellect and the intuition in a very sane way and the resultant clarity helps us lead our lives with less confusion. The Abhidharma looks precisely at the mind and we in turn must use that precision

in our meditation and in our life. Purity in meditation must translate into purity in action. It is very simple, indeed!

That is what strikes you about this book. Drawn from a seminar on Buddhist psychology, the individual chapters are in the form of a short discussion followed by questions and answers, and the simplicity of Trungpa Rinpoche's exposition is very charming. In the chapter on Practice and Intellect, he says: "The main thing we have been trying to do is to make the study of this particular subject experiential...No perfect scholar would study this way and no perfect practitioner would look at this subject the way we have...On the other hand, an open scholar and an open practitioner might both find it quite appropriate..."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

It was interesting to read a few lines of Rusty Hicks from the honorary book for Master Seung Sahn in P.P. June 1987. Hicks talks about Christians merely believing in ideas about God. I only know from my own Christian path (the eastern orthodox as lived for example by Serafim of Sarov) that God is seen and celebrated before all ideas. The essence of the Trinity, which is central to the orthodox life, is not thought or ideation. It is the primary purity that is never tainted by ideas. Every Sunday we celebrate this before-idea, before-time, before-place purity.

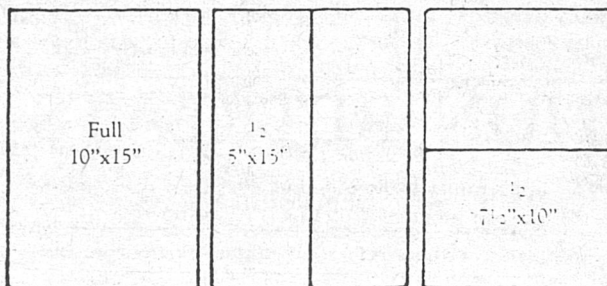
I know from many instructing letters to me from Master Seung Sahn that Zen is this not-making. But many people have ideas about Zen and practice to get rid of them. In orthodox Christianity we use icons, incense, candles, gestures with the body like bowing to the floor, with the hand - thumb and two fingers for the Trinity, two joint fingers for the two natures of Christ (that never mix), and so on. Why make ideas out of these? Making the cross is just making the cross, bowing is just bowing, kissing the icon is just that. Christ is just this and never thinking this.

However, if you think about becoming an independent person before you can believe in God, then you are making ideas about yourself. Rusty Hicks talks about believing in yourself. I think I know a little about it, just letting this ordinary body and mind be what it is. But it is tricky! Safer it must be to let only this, only not making, only God before mind, be what He is already. At any rate, that is my feeling about it.

In the dharma - Keep up the good journal!

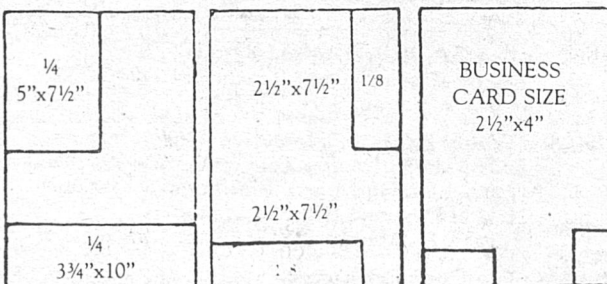
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READING MATTERS

by Sid Kemp

Being Peace, by Thich Nhat Hahn, ed. Arnold Kotler, illus. Mayumi Oda, Parallax Press. PO Box 7355, Berkeley, CA 94707. 1987. 115 pages, paperback. \$8.50.

"The writer only begins a book. The reader finishes it." (Goethe)

"You are not an observer, you are a participant. That is the way I always feel when I give a lecture. I want the audience . . . to be one with me, to practice, to breathe. The speaker and the people who listen must become one for right perception to take place." (*Being Peace*, pp. 38-39)

This quote captures the essence of this new column, **READING MATTERS**. I hope to explore the ways of reading and of becoming one with the written word with you. Writing and reading are acts of co-creation shared by the author and the reader. The end product is not a book, but a transformed understanding. The author begins with his or her life, time and inspiration and produces a book, a transmission of information, a bit of *dharmakaya* (vessel of the *dharma*, or teaching). You and I, as readers, receive it. From there, it is up to us to begin with the book, and bring it into ourselves. And then, to let our whole lives respond to it, and to be changed by it.

We tend to separate our reading minds from our active lives. But we don't learn to do anything by just reading it. Real understanding comes when we put it into practice. How can we read so as to be open to new understanding? And how can we live with a readiness to put our best knowledge into practice? Most important of all, what can we draw from our reading that will help us keep the Zen direction of attaining en-

lightenment and saving all people from suffering?

I am very close to most of the books I will be presenting in this column, and I also feel that the issues they present are important to consider. Both of these are especially true of *Being Peace*. I hope that I am not so close to the book that I distort its contents: most everything I say below is, I believe, true both to the book and to myself. *Being Peace* is important because it addresses two central questions of modern Buddhism: How can Buddhism adapt and survive while the cultures that fostered it are disappearing? And, what transformations will make Buddhism relevant to the modern world, especially in relation to global issues of war and peace?

Christmas Humphreys, the English scholar of Buddhism, said that the most important event of this past century is the meeting of Buddhism and the West. Vietnamese Zen met modernity in forty years of war in Vietnam, an intense crucible that forged a modern Buddhism. Vietnamese Zen Master Thich Nhat Hahn's response to the suffering of the war began with the recognition that a monk cannot remain in his unbombed temple when women and children are being killed. He created the Tiep Hien Order, (the Order of Interbeing) whose practice style and precepts are presented in *Being Peace*.

During the Vietnam War, Thich Nhat Hahn guided the Order of Interbeing and the School for Youth for Social Service (which drew students from the city universities). They provided direct care to villagers devastated by the war. Thich Nhat Hahn developed a practice to help these monks and young lay people remain mindful and helpful in the midst of devastation. Members of the Order, which refused to take sides in the war, were murdered by both governments. Some immolated themselves in order to send a message to the world about the horror of the war. This message, Thich Nhat Hahn tells us, was misunderstood, because we heard it as a political statement, and not as a human one.

Being Peace, and the Tiep Hien precepts, are very much about being fully human in a world of war and suffering. The precepts are the first new Buddhist precepts proposed in over a thousand years, and the first to include positive moral injunctions (e.g., they direct members not only not to kill, but also to protect life; not only not to lie, but also to speak up for the truth even at the risk of your own safety). Thich Nhat Hahn teaches a practice for both celibate individuals and lay families, a practice centered in inner peace but directed towards the creation of world peace and justice, and the restoration of a harmonious relationship with nature. The concept that ties together meditation and political and social action is Interbeing, the awareness that none of us is separate from the whole of the world.

Thich Nhat Hahn was exiled from Vietnam because he expressed his peaceful views in the West, and now lives in Plum Village in the French Pyrenees. At Plum Village and around the world, he helps Vietnamese refugees like himself preserve family harmony and their Buddhist tradition. Tiep Hien Buddhism is unique in Zen in that it includes children and seeks to preserve the transmission of the teaching through families. This family practice style is also much gentler and less intensive than Korean and Japanese Zen. Also, the intellect is not cut off by paradoxical *koan* practice, rather, it is developed as a tool for the understanding that allows for love.

Being Peace was collected from talks Thich Nhat Hahn gave in the U.S. in 1985. It is addressed to Americans in the hope that we will awaken to what the United States is doing in the world, and to what we can do to be peace and bring peace. Talks to children and adults are interwoven throughout the book, and they blend to produce an accessible and deeply perceptive text.

Thich Nhat introduces a gentle sitting and walking meditation, some basic Buddhist philosophy (drawn from Mahayana texts), and a short poem, or *gatha*, that can be recited silently both during formal practice and throughout the day. The poem says: "Breathing in, I calm my body / Breathing out, I smile / dwelling in the present moment / I know this is the only moment." Using it, I have found, connects each moment of my day and my work back to the quiet of formal practice. It also

brings the mind back into touch with the body, so that I am here, clear about my purpose, and aware of my resources.

Thich Nhat Hahn compares modern life to a man riding a runaway horse. When someone asks the man where he is going, he can only reply, "I don't know, ask the horse." (p.65) Reciting the poem is one device for reining in the runaway horses of our lives. Thich Nhat Hahn offers many others as well, all aimed at breaking through the three root causes of suffering: anger, fear, and forgetfulness. To breathe and recite the poem is to remember, and so to overcome forgetfulness. To sit in meditation is to perceive clearly, and so to overcome fear. And to become one with is to understand and to stop blaming, to stop separating ourselves, and so, to overcome anger.

"Interbeing" is the awareness that the nature of each thing depends on the nature of everything else, and that nothing has a separate self-nature. No thing or activity is separate from everything else; rather, each thing shares a bit of itself with all other things. This awareness creates the link between activism and meditation. For example, political awareness can encourage mindful living. Thich Nhat Hahn tells us that if the Western nations use fifty percent less meat and liquor, then the whole world will have enough grain to eat. This is not a cause for guilt, but rather a reason to change our behavior in light of the awareness of our interbeing. If we argue with family or friends, we can stop and try to understand their situation so that we can love them. We can also perceive how we are, in part, responsible for the situation, and change our actions and attitudes to bring harmony.

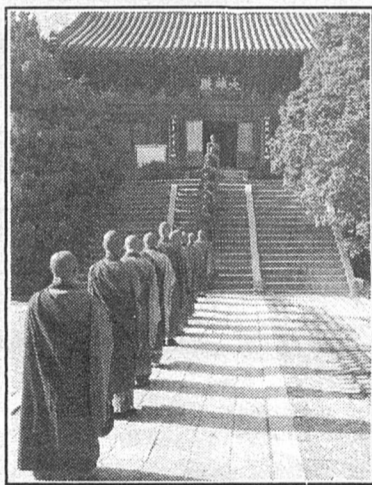
In formal sitting, we enter into a mental state of oneness with our world that deepens our interconnectedness and extends our love. Thus, understanding the suffering of the world gives both motivation and direction to our practice, while practice guides our understanding and compassion so that the wisest course of action becomes clear, and so that we can sustain loving clarity in ourselves day to day. The first Noble Truth of Buddhism, Thich Nhat Hahn reminds us, is that all life contains suffering. But by example and quiet guidance, he shows us that there is a gentle way to face that suffering and transform the world we share. □

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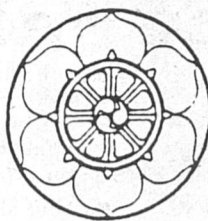


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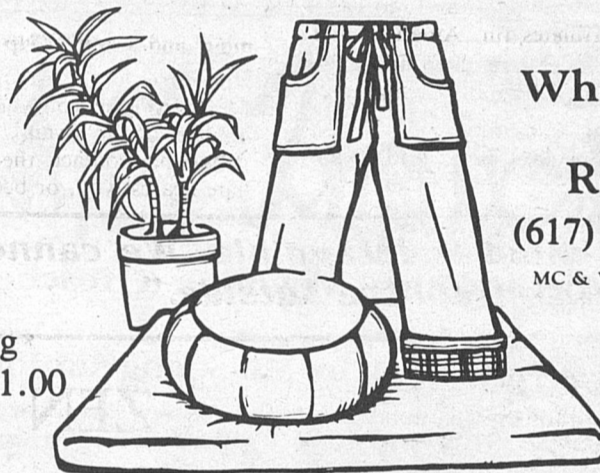
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c/o Warsaw Zen Center

*signifies Head Temple

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE KWAN UM ZEN SCHOOL

The Teachers: Zen Master Seung Sahn is the first Korean Zen Master to live and teach in the West. He is the 78th Patriarch in the Korean Chogye Order, and became a Zen Master in his native Korea at the age of 22. After teaching in Korea and Japan for many years, he came to the United States in 1972 and founded the Providence Zen Center, now located in Cumberland, Rhode Island. He is addressed as "Soen Sa Nim" (Honored Zen Teacher) by his students.

Soen Sa Nim has established over 50 Zen centers and affiliated groups in the United States, Canada, Brazil, Europe and Korea. These centers comprise the Kwan Um Zen School. The Providence Zen Center is Head Temple in the United States. In 1984 a Kwan Um Zen School of Poland was formed which includes five Zen Centers and two affiliated groups, of which the Head Temple is Warsaw Zen Center.

Soen Sa Nim travels worldwide leading retreats and teaching Buddhism. In recent years he has been doing more intensive international peace work, bringing people of many countries and religious traditions together to demonstrate world peace. In 1985 he was presented with the World Peace Award by the International Cultural Federation, under the auspices of the Korean government. Working to strengthen the connection between American Zen and Korean Buddhism, he has established the Seoul International Zen Center in Korea and the Diamond Hill Zen Monastery in the United States. At Diamond Hill, Zen students who wish to may become monks and live the traditional monastic life in the original practice style of Bodhidharma.

Soen Sa Nim has published **Dropping Ashes on the Buddha** and **Only Don't Know**, collections of his teaching letters and Zen stories, and a book of poetry, **Bone of Space**.

He has given "inga"—authority to lead retreats and teach kong-an practice—to 7 senior students. Called Master Dharma teachers, they regularly travel to Zen centers and affiliates in America and abroad, leading retreats and giving public talks. The Master Dharma Teachers are:

George Bowman, Cambridge Zen Center; Barbara and Lincoln Rhodes and Jacob Perl, Providence Zen Center; Mu Deung

Sunim and Robert Moore, Dharma Sah (Los Angeles); and Richard Shrobe, Chogye International Zen Center of New York.

Training Programs: Each Zen center holds meditation practice every morning and evening, and a weekly Introduction to Zen talk. These events are free and open to the public. Some centers also offer personal interviews each month with the teachers in our school when available.

Introduction to Zen Workshops: Beginners and newcomers can experience Zen practice for a day, with instruction on meditation, question periods, informal discussions and lunch.

Short Intensive Retreats (Yong Maeng Jong Jin, or "Leap like a tiger while sitting"): Each month many of the Zen centers hold silent meditation retreats for 3 or 7 days under the direction of Zen Master Seung Sahn or one of the Master Dharma Teachers. The daily schedule includes 12 hours of sitting, bowing, chanting, working and eating in traditional temple style. Personal interviews and Dharma talks are given by the Zen teacher. Advance reservation is necessary and requires a \$10 non-refundable deposit.

90-Day Intensive Retreat (Kyol Che or "Tight Dharma"): Conducted in total silence, long intensive meditation retreats are powerful tools for examining and clarifying our lives. The daily schedule includes 12 hours of sitting, bowing, chanting and formal silent meals. Personal interviews and Dharma talks are given frequently. Registration is for 90 days, 21-day periods or a one-week intensive. The School offers three long Kyol Che's (one each in Poland, Korea and the United States) and a short three-week summer Kyol Che at Providence Zen Center. See schedule on this page for details.

Chanting Retreats (Kido): Several times a year chanting retreats are held. A Kido is powerful training in keeping a one-pointed mind and using group energy to deepen awareness.

Membership: If you would like to become a member of the Kwan Um Zen School, you may either contact the Zen center or affiliate nearest you, or become a member-at-

large by writing directly to the School. You do not have to be a member to participate in any of the training programs. However, rates for members are reduced and include a free subscription to the bi-monthly NEWSLETTER and the international

newspaper, PRIMARY POINT (3 issues per year). The most up-to-date calendar information is in the NEWSLETTER. Non-members may subscribe for \$6.00 per year, and \$10.00 per year for PRIMARY POINT.

RETREAT AND SPECIAL EVENTS CALENDAR

| | | | | |
|---------|---------|--|-------|--|
| October | 16-18 | Cambridge (special retreat led by Genpo Sensei) | 4-10 | Empty Gate retreat; weekend includes Precepts, New Year's Ceremony (SSN) |
| | 17 | Chogye (RS) | | |
| | 23-25 | Seattle (BM) | 16-18 | Dharma Sah (SSN) |
| | 24-25 | Ontario (GB) | | |
| | 31 | New Haven (RS) | March | 5 |
| | 30-11/1 | Providence (LR) | | |
| | | Southern Dharma Retreat Center, Hot Springs, NC (BR) | April | 1 |
| Nov. | 6-8 | North Florida (GB) | | 9 |
| | 13-15 | Lexington, KY (RS) | | |
| | | Kansas Retreat in Fayetteville, AR (BM) | | 11-17 |
| | | Chogye (BR) | | |
| | 14-15 | Cambridge (GB) | | |
| | 20-22 | Empty Gate, retreat and kido (LR) | | |
| Dec. | 5 | Su Dok Sah, Korea begin Intl. Kyol Che | | |
| | 5-11 | Providence (BM) | | |
| | 12 | Providence, Buddha's Enlightenment Day (SSN) | | |
| January | 3 | Providence, opening of 90-day Kyol Che (BR) | | |

WINTER KYOL CHE PROVIDENCE ZEN CENTER

January 3 - 24 first period
 January 24 - February 14 second period
 February 14 - 21 intensive week
 February 21 - March 13 third period
 March 13 - April 1 fourth period

Please call the appropriate Zen Center to confirm these dates and teachers, and make your retreat reservations at least two weeks in advance. Retreat leaders are indicated by their initials: SSN, Zen Master Seung Sahn; GB, George Bowman; BR, Barbara Rhodes; LR, Lincoln Rhodes; MD, Mu Deung; JP, Jacob Perl; RS, Richard Shrobe; BM, Robert Moore.

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SOME DAY WE ARE ALL DYING

Continued from page 3

One of the most helpful ideas for me was SOFT BELLY. "The belly. Very important," Stephen said. "Much tension in the belly. We can use it as a diagnostic for how present we are. If we keep coming back to soft belly, ground, we can tell the degree of our presence by hard belly."

I had been HARD BELLY with a friend of mine who has AIDS. I would get scared that he would fall down or scared that he would insist on walking beyond his capacity and collapse or that he would be angry and hostile toward me because he was tired of all the "helpers." All of these things had happened before. So, two days after the conference, I was walking next to him and he was unsteady on his feet. I touched the back of his waist to support him. He didn't like it. He took my hand away. I got afraid. He had already fallen that morning. Then I remembered SOFT BELLY. I bent my

knees a little as I walked and breathed lower down. I paid attention to his feet maneuvering the brick walk, grass, flagstones, planks of deck. I saw how careful he was, how precisely he prepared his foot to lift at each rise of the brick walk. And I realized that he might or might not fall and I might or might not catch him. Don't know. But at least my arms would no longer surround him with my anxious tension. I began to enjoy walking with him. I began to notice the poppies and sweet peas near his ankles. And later on, when I rubbed his back with lotion, I felt his skin under my hand, the fine texture of it, the bones underneath. I felt less separation-- his back, my hand, his breathing, mine, comfort, time passing.

Stephen said, "It isn't that we don't have feelings, but not to be afraid of our feelings. Let them pass through. 'Don't know' is soft belly. 'Don't know' is receiving healing. Hard belly is 'can't let healing happen,'

angry preferences, like and dislike, trying to 'get it.'"

In my relationships I often don't let feelings rise and pass, rise and pass. I hold on to them. I want to control myself, other people, my feelings, theirs. So now I ask my belly to go soft, let all rising and falling pass through.

One man who was diagnosed with AIDS said, "I have found people and agencies who are very willing to help me die. I've been fortunate that I've also found some who are willing to help me live. What have you seen in people who go beyond their diagnosis?"

Stephen responded with a story of a very hard belly businesswoman who was dying of cancer and alienating everyone around her by judging and blaming. "After six weeks in the hospital she couldn't stand it anymore...She let herself drop into the pain. All of a sudden she experienced herself as a black Biafran woman on her side in a hut nursing a dying child. She experienced herself as an Eskimo woman dying of starvation with great pain in her back. She experienced herself as an Asian woman crushed by a rock...Finally she said, 'I experienced the ten thousand beings suffering at the same moment. It changed from being my pain to the pain.' In the next six months, her room became the center of mercy. Everyone came to her room...But I don't know what healing is anymore. I don't know."

I have to admit that I did not understand all of Soen Sa Nim's words, but it didn't really matter. "Don't try to understand," he said. "Just do it! ...Someone hungry, feed them. Someone dying, comfort them. No outside, no inside. No subject, no object. Just do it."

Soen Sa Nim gave us several very animated performances where he played all of the roles in the story. "When child play outdoors, fall down, bleed, go play again. Then the mother comes, sees the blood, says, 'Oh! blood! Child remembers...much crying. Our mind makes everything!' He flung his arms around wildly as the child playing, drew his eyebrows up in a horrified expression as the mother, then heaved great sobs as the wailing child. We laughed and

laughed, recognizing our own mind-manipulations.

"When you are thinking, then your mind and my mind are different. But when we don't know, then we have same mind, empty mind, before thinking. Stillness, emptiness, silence... 'Be still and know that I am God...' If you say 'don't know,' then you are the universe, universe is you."

Some of us took the opportunity to sit zazen in the early morning and evening. What a privilege to sit with others and to chant in that full-bodied, no-room-to-think way.

"There is nothing you can do for yourself that will give you what a daily meditation practice can give you," Stephen said. "If you only meditate when you feel like it, then all you see is the 'feel like it' mind. You can't just do it when you feel like it. Then you lose the opportunity to bring into balance the 'feel like it' mind and 'not feel like it' mind."

I had sat at the Providence Zen Center for two days last winter and had difficulty with the chanting--too demanding, foreign sounds, too long sitting, not enough breath in me. But I was told to do it anyway, "This is not a spectator sport!" This time, I really heard Soen Sa Nim when he said, "You can do anything. The choice is: I can or I cannot. Don't check, moment to moment, and you can do anything." So I got into it. I blasted out my syllables of Korean and thoroughly enjoyed not having room to think.

Perhaps the most touching moment for me was Soen Sa Nim's response to the question, "Do you have suffering?"

"If you have suffering, I have suffering. When your suffering is over, then I have no suffering."

Stephen then ended with, "Let yourself die... name, reputation...let all solidity fall away. Let fluidity come, like ice cube melting...In our life, just do one thing at a time. That's the way to prepare for death." □

Ellen Anthony is a writer, artist and former TV producer living on Cape Cod. A Quaker and student of Zen Buddhism, she works with the Provincetown AIDS Support Group.

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