

Harmonizing is the Number One Practice

by Dae Poep Sa Nim

*This fall Dae Poep Sa Nim's new book, **One Dust Particle Swallows Heaven and Earth**, will be published. The book consists of talks and questions and answers from the past few years of Dae Poep Sa Nim's teaching in Europe and Hawaii. Topics to be addressed are: Zen and religion, practice, perceiving karma and giving energy, ceremonies, relationships and the body. For availability contact Centre Zen de Paris or the Kwan Um Zen School office.*

The following is an excerpt from the chapter on relationships. The original talk took place in December 1987, at Dharma Buddhist Temple of Hawaii during a retreat.

We are attached to this form body with many likes and dislikes and opinions of what is right and wrong. At your home you are very comfortable. You have your own bedroom, eat what you want, rest any time you are tired. You are only pleasing your self. Is that really finding your true self? You have only been pleasing this bag of flesh. Humans are very attached to this bag of flesh. It is difficult to find your true self. If you spoil this body it wants more, if you get lazy it gets more lazy.

This body is made of 'Desire I'. By only pleasing this desire body, your true self is far away. When the body gets old it is not worth one spoonful of ash. While you have this body why should you only please it? We must use this body to find our true self so that we do not

boyfriend, husband and wife, but with everyone around you.

How can we harmonize? Kill 'I, my, me'. As soon as 'I, my, me' appears you are far away from others and like a small stone on the street. Nobody wants to be lonely. I always hear people say, 'Why am I lonely? Why can't I communicate with others? Why doesn't everyone like me? I try hard but they don't like me.' They blame others, but our difficulties come from 'I, my, me'. If you kill 'I, my, me' one-hundred percent you can see your true self and you can harmonize with others.

If you continue to keep 'I like' and 'I don't like', even while you are practicing, you will still make karma. Put down all of your blockages and become one with your true self; then you and universal energy become one. For example, when you become sick it usually comes from the mind. You make 'I like,' 'I don't like,' 'I'm tired,' etc. At that time you are creating negative energy. This negative energy does not go to somebody else; it comes right back to you and you become sick. Take off all conditions and situations and there is no negative energy. You can live freely and get in touch with universal energy. You will have no difficulties; you can do everything moment-to-moment. Before this you were a slave to time and space. Putting everything down means you can make your own time and space. You can use time and space. At that moment you are the universe and the universe is you. Life and death, they are up to you.

This retreat is very free but very restricted. Which one would you like? Free or restricted? Those in favor of the restricted

way, please raise your hand. Those in favor of the free way, please raise your hand. Nobody wants to raise their hand? What do you like? Free? You can have free. But free

is restricted and restricted is free. Understand? We practice so that we may become a master of free and restricted. Practice is very difficult, but it is also easy. If you can harmonize with others it will be very easy. If you cannot, it will be very difficult and you will be in hell. It's all up to you.

Don't have fears about practice. Just relax. We will provide good food and wine sometimes too. Why wine? In our lives until now how many times have you really been relaxed? Even if you are sitting in your nice bed your mind is thinking, thinking, thinking. You cannot relax. Practice is to attain relaxation. But relaxation without bone is not good. Relaxation with bone and purpose is good. As much as possible, relax. Put everything down. Once you are able to do this you will find the biggest diamond in the world.

Make your bowl very big. If you only have a small bowl not too much can go into it. Make it big and a lot can go into it. But to make your bowl big you must do your homework, whether your mind is clear or not. Do your homework, which means finish the number of mantras that I asked you to do, and your mind will become clear. If I talk for three hours and you listen with a cloudy mind, you will not get anything out of it. If I talk all day nothing will go into your brain. But if your mind is clear and I say just one sentence, it will go into your consciousness.

You have a great opportunity here. Take advantage of it and share the energy, practice together. Maybe in the next life someone who is here will be your husband or wife, boyfriend or girlfriend, sister or brother. So harmonize. If you do not have good relationships with someone you might be born as enemies. Don't make enemies.

Hawaii-Retreat or Vacation?

by Do Mun Sunim and Do Haeng Sunim

Twice a year, in January and August, European, American and Mexican students of the Kwan Um Zen School of Europe travel to Hawaii for a "retreat/vacation" at the temple of Ji Kwang Dae Poep Sa Nim, The Dharma Buddhist Temple of Hawaii, just outside downtown Honolulu. The temple is a house in a quiet residential area, not far from the beaches, a large athletic field and a shopping center. It is situated along a high ridge of volcanic rock and is a strong energy point.

The retreats are held for three weeks. Everyone - usually between forty and fifty-five people - stays together in the house (this past August there were forty-eight persons). The retreat style brings practice directly into everyone's social and even vacation situations. Wake-up is at 6 a.m., followed by the regular Kwan Um Zen School morning schedule of bowing, chanting and sitting. All meals are communal and informal. All of the participants take turns helping to clean the temple and clean-up after meals.

There are seven altars in the house. Each morning at 10 a.m. rice and fresh water are offered at each altar in appreciation of Buddha-nature, our ancestors and the four elements of the universe which are constantly supporting us. Following that and until 12 noon is a Buddhist energy ceremony, at which one or more of the following takes place: a private interview with Dae Poep Sa Nim, a talk, meditation, soen yu exercises, or special teaching by Dae Poep Sa Nim. Afternoons are completely

free with many people going in groups to the beach, the mountains or into town.

Evening practice is at 6 p.m.: chanting, a short period of sitting, and a talk with questions and answers by Dae Poep Sa Nim— this is followed by a few short, ten-minute talks given by students (each participant gives one such talk during the retreat)— dinner follows. Late evening, as well as the afternoon, always find a number of students in the Dharma room doing extra bows, sitting or finishing mantra "assignments".

The retreats at the temple in Hawaii are extremely interesting and effective because they bring into a very good situation - a beautiful environment and the opportunity to really relax and have fun - a very strong emphasis on practicing. Through the three weeks one can see oneself and others growing in integrating practice with everyday life and making a necessary commitment to keeping a strong and continuous formal practice, both with others and individually. Dae Poep Sa Nim teaches her students not to separate their practicing mind from any moment and situations of their lives. These retreats are designed to strengthen each person's practice, which, critically, also means learning how to harmonize with others. A very central part of Dae Poep Sa Nim's teaching is to practice and keep the Bodhi mind in any situation in human life, to be able to truly be with and do for others. The Hawaii retreats, by bringing many people together under one roof for an extended period of time to live, practice, and share together, are a great lesson in just that.

"How can we harmonize? Kill 'I, my, me'"

have to be slaves to it. When you find your true self you can control your own life and death instead of being a slave to the body. I understand what kind of a life everyone of you are living and what kind of situation you are in now. Instead of pleasing your body, take this opportunity to see how much karma you have, how many conditions and blockage you have. You can really see yourself.

Most people want to practice in a quiet place with nobody around. We just want to practice. This kind of practicing is attachment to practice. Practice means to attain enlightenment. But attaining enlightenment is not enough. As soon as you attain enlightenment you must help others. In that way enlightenment exists continually. If you are only attached to practice, it is dummy practice. At this time put down likes and dislikes, right and wrong and take advantage of the situation. Try to harmonize with others. If you can harmonize with others, you don't have to sit on the floor in meditation. If you only do formal meditation, it is not worth even one penny.

When you have communication and action with others, you are doing the number one practice. Harmonizing with others means your 'I, my, me' desires are already being eliminated. That is very important. If a person is able to harmonize with others, this person is a winner in their life and knows how to utilize universal energy correctly; he/she is already Buddha. If you have no great purpose for enlightenment you are only falling into heavy karma. Look at yourself and see how well you can let go of your situation and condition. Even if you have a difficult situation, see how much you are able to drop it.

We don't live by ourselves. We exist with others. Without others there is no Buddha, no God. Without conditions and situations just harmonize with others. You have to learn to love together. Not only girlfriend and



Dae Poep Sa Nim

Dae Poep Sa Nim received the title "Dae", meaning 'great' (which makes her full title "Great Dharma Master"), from Zen Master Seung Sahn during a special ceremony at the Centre Zen de Paris in June, 1988. This title is usually given to an enlightened master after the age of sixty and even then it is very rare. Dae Poep Sa Nim received this title in recognition of her deep enlightenment and her bringing together of Sutra and Zen practice and teaching. She is the first woman in fifteen hundred years of Korean Buddhism to become "Dae Poep Sa."

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